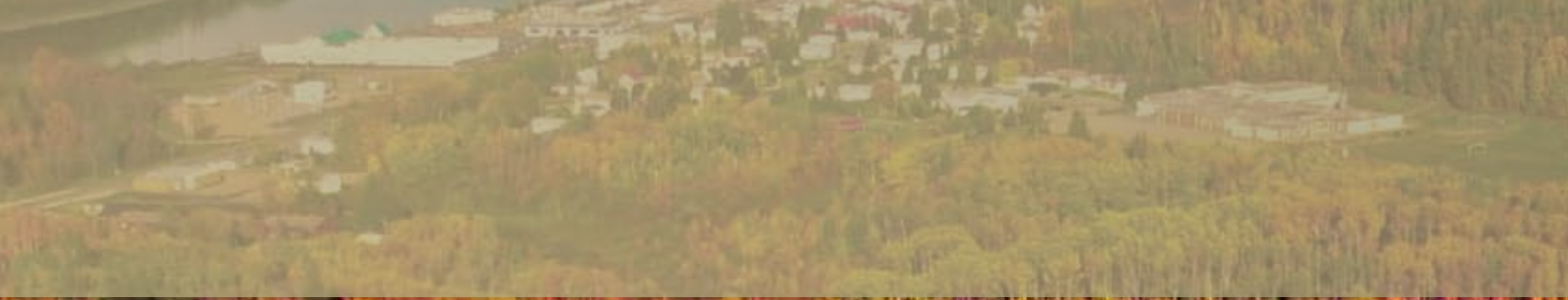


Athabasca University 

Business Plan • 2009-2013





An aerial photograph of a university campus during autumn. The top portion of the image shows a semi-transparent green banner with the university's name and logo. Below the banner, the campus is visible, featuring several large, multi-story buildings with reddish-brown roofs. The surrounding area is densely packed with trees in various stages of autumn color, ranging from bright yellow and orange to deep red and purple. A tennis court is visible in the lower-left quadrant, and a large green lawn is in the lower-right. The overall scene is a vibrant display of seasonal foliage.

Athabasca University 

Business Plan
2009-2013

excellence • openness • flexibility • innovation





STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTABILITY

This business plan for the four-year period beginning April 1, 2009, was prepared under the direction of Athabasca University Governing Council in accordance with the Government Accountability Act and directions provided by Alberta Advanced Education and Technology. All material economic and fiscal data, as of March 31, 2009, of which we are aware, have been considered in preparing this plan. If key assumptions materially change, this business plan may be revised.

Athabasca University's priorities, as outlined in this business plan, were developed in the context of Alberta Advanced Education and Technology's business and fiscal planning guidelines.

Athabasca University is committed to achieving the planned results presented in this document.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Athabasca University Governing Council,

(original signed by Joy Romero)

Joy Romero, P.Eng., MBA PM
Chair
Athabasca University Governing Council

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INTRODUCTION

Although Athabasca University enters the fourth year of its five-year Strategic University Plan at a time of worldwide economic turmoil, the university remains confident that, with appropriate external support, it will achieve its planned goals. Considerable progress has already been made, despite many internal and external challenges. AU will continue to advance the goals articulated in the Strategic University Plan, the Academic Plan, the Research Plan and the International Plan, resolved to realize its vision of barrier-free access to university education.

Completion of the following projects and programs has moved the university toward accomplishing its major SUP goals, as detailed in this Business Plan:

- AU is maintaining its commitment to providing high quality educational opportunities as demonstrated in a number of new programs:
 - The Doctor of Education in distance education program was launched in April 2008.
 - Applications are being accepted for Canada's first English-language Doctor of Business Administration program, to launch in April 2009.
 - Several additional new professional programs will soon be launched.
- AU is continuing to strengthen and enhance its research agenda through, for example, the initiation of three new research institutes, the addition of three new research chairs and an increase in the number of awards and grants received by faculty members.
- AU's international profile has been enhanced and the university has initiated a number of international collaborative activities with partners in several countries, including Singapore, India, Mexico and the United States.
- AU is maintaining its commitment to the Athabasca community and to its staff and faculty. Construction of the \$30 million Academic and Research Centre building in Athabasca has begun.
- AU's profile with the public, prospective learners, the corporate sector, donors and funding agencies continues to grow.
- AU is maintaining its commitment to open access, as demonstrated through a number of groundbreaking projects including the AU Press, Canada's only open-access scholarly press, officially launched in June of 2008.
- AU's record for innovation in learning technology continues, for example, through the implementation of an enterprise content management system.
- AU is continuing to strengthen its commitment to reducing barriers to access to post-secondary learning. The network of supports for students, including those with disabilities, has been expanded, and funding for scholarships has received a substantial one-time increase for this fiscal year.

- AU's commitment to the reallocation of resources as outlined in the SUP has been demonstrated in several ways. The university completed its faculty structure review and is now implementing a new academic structure that will result in the reorganization of most academic centres and schools into four distinct faculties, with the Centre for Distance Education remaining as a separate flagship unit. Program integration at the undergraduate and graduate levels is also anticipated, resulting in opportunities for achieving operating efficiencies and synergies throughout the university.

Universities are not immune to the effects of the current economic climate of the province and the country, indeed, the entire world. In the past, AU has met financial challenges through a combination of academic leadership, fiscal frugality and growth. While these will remain hallmarks of AU, technological challenges and increasingly sophisticated demands for e-learning by students and Albertans generally will require a more aggressive government and community investment in the university in the next two to three years.

INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

OUR MISSION

Athabasca University, Canada's Open University, is dedicated to the removal of barriers that restrict access to and success in university-level study and to increasing equality of educational opportunity for adult learners worldwide.

We are committed to excellence in teaching, research and scholarship and to being of service to the general public.

OUR MANDATE

Athabasca University is a board-governed open university committed, through distance education, to increasing accessibility in Alberta, throughout Canada and internationally to university-level study and to meeting the educational needs of the workplace.

At the undergraduate level, the university is mandated to offer degree programs and university transfer courses in the natural and pure sciences, humanities, social sciences, interdisciplinary studies, administrative studies, commerce, nursing and allied professional fields. Credit-based university certificates are offered within the structure of the university's undergraduate degree programs. As a partner in Campus Alberta, Athabasca University offers its courses and educational services to students registered in Alberta post-secondary institutions. Working with these and out-of-province institutions, Athabasca University also provides degree completion opportunities for university transfer students and diploma graduates. Non-credit continuing education courses are also offered.

At the graduate level, the university offers degree programs in distance education, health studies, and business administration. Credit-based university graduate diploma programs are offered within the structure of the university's graduate degree programs.

To the benefit of students, Athabasca University is committed to excellence in individualized distance education, co-ordination of credit and credit transfer, assessment of prior learning and associated forms of learning accreditation.

Dedicated to research and scholarship in various disciplines, with a particular focus on distance education and associated learning technologies, Athabasca University provides international leadership in individualized distance education methods and technologies.

Approved by the Minister of Advanced Education, April 1999¹

¹ A revised mandate is under review by Alberta Advanced Education and Technology.

OUR VALUES

The students, faculty and staff of Athabasca University profess a set of complementary values that are fundamental to the university's identity and provide the foundation for its practices.

We value excellence.

The search for excellence is the hallmark of all of our endeavours.

We value learning.

Student learning and satisfaction are measures of our success.

We value scholarly research.

We engage in reflective practice through the scholarship of discovery and the scholarship of teaching.

We value the free exchange of ideas.

A respectful climate for open discourse promotes innovation, discovery and social responsibility.

We value openness and flexibility.

Reducing barriers to education enhances access and social equity.

We value diversity and inclusiveness.

Diversity and inclusiveness enhance the quality both of learning and of the workplace.

We value our employees.

The commitment, innovation, creativity and continuous learning of every employee contribute to our success.

We value accountability.

We are accountable to our students, to each other and to the public.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

Despite challenges presented by the current economic climate, Athabasca University remains committed to its goal of removing barriers to post-secondary educational achievement, confident of its significant role in post-secondary education in Alberta and Canada, and optimistic about its future.

One of four public comprehensive Alberta universities, AU is committed to excellence in teaching and research. Funded by the Government of Alberta, AU has the mandate for the provision of university-level distance education programs in the province. Its programs are approved by the Campus Alberta Quality Council. In addition, AU is fully accredited by the Government of British Columbia and, in the United States, by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. No other public Canadian university holds this level of foreign accreditation.

Like all other Canadian universities, AU provides post-secondary learning opportunities to Albertans and other Canadians and to students from other countries. It is unique, however, in guaranteeing access to university-level study to a broad range of non-traditional students. By removing geographical, financial, social and cultural barriers that traditionally limit access to post-secondary achievement, AU transforms lives: 74 per cent of AU graduates are the first in their family to complete a degree.

AU's flexible learning model allows students to start courses at any time and to study at their own pace—at home, at work or wherever they may find themselves. The need for a university that is accessible to working adults is critical as more and more Albertans and Canadians seek to refine their employment skills at a time of economic upheaval and labour dislocation. Eighty-one per cent of AU students work while studying. AU allows them to earn a degree while continuing to contribute to their families, their communities and the economies of Alberta and Canada.

From its beginning in 1972, AU has pioneered new approaches to post-secondary learning: through its open philosophy, through its outreach, through its revolutionary methods of course and program design and delivery and through its acceptance and adoption of technology-based alternatives to traditional instructional channels and contexts.

AU at a Glance

- AU serves 37,615 students (68,850 course registrations).
- AU offers over 748 courses in more than 90 undergraduate and graduate programs.
- AU employs 1,311 faculty and staff members.
- AU generates over \$3 million annually in research activities.
- AU maintains over 350 collaborative agreements with other Canadian educational institutions and First Nations groups.

AU Students

- The average undergraduate is 29; the average graduate student, 37.
- 81 per cent work while they study.
- 67 per cent are women.
- Over 90 per cent study year round, balancing their studies with other commitments.
- 63 per cent of graduates support dependants.
- 74 per cent of graduates are the first in their family to earn a university degree.

As one of Alberta's four public universities, AU has been a key player in the formation of Campus Alberta. The university's mission of removing barriers to post-secondary study supports Campus Alberta's basic premise of ensuring that seamless learning opportunities are available to all Alberta students

During the coming year, the university community will engage in extensive consultations in preparation for drafting the next Strategic University Plan in 2011.

Teaching and Learning

AU's curriculum is informed by research and creative teaching and reinforced by a supportive learning environment. It provides opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to acquire research skills, promote innovation and contribute to society.

AU now offers 748 courses in more than 90 undergraduate and graduate degree, diploma and certificate programs. The university is unique in guaranteeing access to university-level study to a broad range of non-traditional university students:

- those who are seeking an alternative to a conventional, campus-based experience
- those who wish to continue their careers while they augment their education
- those who have ongoing family or community responsibilities
- those living in rural, northern and remote areas
- those who cannot find a place in residential institutions
- those with non-standard academic backgrounds
- those whose family lacks a tradition of formal academic study

AU is active in the open access and open source movements and is working to develop projects that would provide access to free online learning. In keeping with its dedication to openness, the university is partnering with Canadian Virtual University, a collaboration of 12 Canadian universities committed to facilitating transfer credit and providing students with more flexible options in accessing university education, to develop online courses. The university is also developing additional partnerships, for example, to explore ways of easing access to online engineering courses.

AU predominately serves the adult learner. The concept of lifelong learning as essential to people who wish to participate fully and successfully in their communities and careers is central to AU as it is to Campus Alberta. Adult learning opportunities provided by AU reduce barriers to university level education and play a particularly important role in advancing Alberta's workforce.

Research and Scholarship

Research and scholarship continue to play an important role at AU. Research is what sets universities apart from other Alberta post-secondary institutions. AU has made significant progress in advancing its research agenda at all levels. Expanding research and scholarly activities across disciplines is an important goal of the Strategic University Plan.

Research Institutes

In addition to the individual work of AU faculty members, substantial progress has been made on the development of two new research institutes, the Athabasca River Basin Research Institute and the Technology Enhanced Learning Research Institute. The ARBRI, envisioned as an innovative interdisciplinary research centre that will exclusively study the Athabasca River Basin, has garnered significant external interest. The TELRI focuses on the use of digital technologies to support learning. Both are expected to be formally launched in the coming year.

In response to the research goals articulated in its Strategic University Plan, AU continues to lay the groundwork for additional research institutes and projects. A new Institute in Project Management is expected to be launched in 2009-10, and initial work is ongoing on two new research initiatives:

- **Virtual Media Lab:** The virtual media lab will be a website platform for curriculum enhancement and development, social networking and pedagogical and disciplinary research. In addition to providing a space for mentoring and peer review, it will allow undergraduate and graduate students to apply theory, practice techniques, research and investigate, study, debate and collaborate, and demonstrate and display. This innovative lab will foster cross-disciplinary collaboration with other academic centres at AU, especially in professional and technical writing.

- **Social Networking Initiative:** This initiative is intended to transform the quality of learning and instruction at AU and to blur the boundaries between academe and broader local, national and international communities, including communities of interest, geographical communities and industry. Through improved networks and social ties, the distance learning experience will be enhanced, improving teaching and research, building stronger local, regional, national and international ties and enabling simpler, more efficient links with industrial and academic partners. Lessons learned will be transferable to industrial and commercial settings, where workforces are increasingly distributed and isolated, and to other colleges and universities, where blended virtual and face-to-face communities are becoming increasingly commonplace.

AU Press

AU Press, Canada's first twenty-first century scholarly press and the country's first open access university press, was formally launched in June 2008. Access to all AU Press publications is free over the Internet at www.aupress.ca, and wherever possible, publications are licensed with Creative Commons. Print volumes are available on demand.

The first book published, *The Importance of Being Monogamous: Marriage and Nation Building in Western Canada in 1915*, by Sarah Carter, was long listed for a Cundill International Prize in history. Another early title, *Imagining Head-Smashed-In: Aboriginal Buffalo Hunting on the Northern Plains*, by Jack Brink, was selected by the Society for American Archaeology as the best archeology book of 2009 in the popular writing category.

During its first year of operation, the press has published 20 books, and it plans to publish an additional 45 over the next two years. In the next few years, as the range of titles grows, these volumes, as well as other digital products, will be used to support courses and reduce copyright costs.

Student Support

Financial hardship is one of the many barriers to post-secondary education that students and prospective students face, and one that AU seeks to eliminate. By the end of this fiscal year, AU will have awarded \$1,131,478 in scholarships and bursaries, more than in any other year in the university's history. Increasing awards to this extraordinary level was made possible by allocating funds received through the Renaissance Program of the Access to the Future Fund.

Several new award categories have also been established, largely with the assistance Renaissance Fund funding received over the past two fiscal years. These have included funding for

- graduate student awards (\$90,000)
- awards to graduate and undergraduate students with disabilities (\$60,000)
- entrance scholarships for post-diploma undergraduate students (\$150,000)
- awards to Aboriginal students living in rural or remote communities (\$50,000)

AU anticipates returning to a level of funding consistent with that of past years, in the order of \$500,000. Work continues to increase endowments for additional awards.

Collaborations

AU is collaborative by its very nature and is integral to Campus Alberta. The university maintains more than 350 articulation agreements with universities, colleges, professional associations and First Nations groups across the Canada, helping to facilitate transfer credits between institutions. This collaborative spirit is demonstrated both in the number of students from other Alberta universities that come to AU to take one or two courses and by AU's relationship with the college system.

Provincial and National Collaborations

Committed to making post-secondary education accessible to as many learners as possible, AU continues to open many pathways to learning. Students registered in other Alberta post-secondary institutions make extensive use of AU's courses and educational services in completing their degrees. This accessibility accounts for a large percentage of students enrolled at the university: 29.5 per cent of AU undergraduates were visiting from other Alberta post-secondary institutions during the past year.

AU has entered into hundreds of agreements and partnerships with colleges and technical institutes in Alberta, across Canada and abroad, and it continues to broaden and strengthen its relationships with other post-secondary institutions. In the past year, for example, 2,690 Alberta college graduates were enrolled in AU degree completion programs. In addition, AU is able to provide educational opportunities for tradespeople who wish to become involved in trades education and training. AU also collaborates with Alberta public colleges to offer courses on site, enabling access to face-to-face learning where appropriate.

International Collaborations

AU continues to work on developing opportunities for international collaborations and is well positioned to do so because of its status as an open university. Open and distance learning continues to play a significant role in providing access to higher education to people in remote areas, particularly in the developing world. Open universities endeavour to

- produce more graduates at a lower per student cost
- provide for greater equality of educational opportunity
- provide access to adult students
- provide professional qualifications
- assist in the development and democratization of their respective countries

The growth of open and distance learning is a testament to the demise of exclusivity in higher education provision. The exclusionary triangle of access, cost and quality is being broken by technology and its evolution, allowing broad access to quality education at an affordable price. Traditional learners are now being joined by increasing numbers of lifelong adult learners who need updating to remain current in their field, to increase opportunities for career advancement or to guarantee employment.

AU continues to work on international collaborations in the Caribbean, Malaysia, China, India, Singapore, Mexico and the United States. There is also considerable interest in deepening relations with Costa Rica and with the Dominican Republic, although funding remains an issue.

Relations have also been advanced with the Chinese open universities in Tianjin and Shanghai. These initiatives are contributing significantly to resolving several issues and to determining the way forward for AU's Asian relationships. In the coming year, planning to determine how to best proceed with these relationships will begin. AU continues to have an active collaborative presence at Soochow University in Suzhou, China, and at Stamford College in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The first collaborative activity under the Memorandum of Collaboration between AU, Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University and the University of Mumbai was a workshop conducted by Professor Jon Baggaley. Held in 2008 in Mumbai, the workshop was well attended and included participants from a number of Indian universities.

As leaders in the provision of accessible post-secondary distance education in North America, Athabasca University, the University of Maryland University College and Mexico's Tecnológico de Monterrey came together during the past year to form the North American Alliance of Innovative Universities. This alliance will work to advance leadership in developing and using innovative educational models and technologies for online adult education. Between 2009 and 2011, the NAAIU is hosting a series of three annual conferences, which will focus on the North American Free Trade Agreement and free trade issues in North America. It also plans to lay the groundwork for an innovative international MBA in continental trade, tax and law, the first degree of its kind.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Canada's economy, like that of most countries worldwide, is in recession. Erosion of AU's investment income in 2008-09 will have an immediate impact on the university, an impact that may be compounded by possible limited increases in government funding. However, the university must continue to meet its contractual obligations and make the changes required to ensure the continued delivery of quality programs to its students. AU's information and communication technology systems require a major capital investment of \$90 million (\$80 million in external funding). Funds for this investment must come from external sources as the cost is beyond the university's current capacity. Despite such issues, AU remains committed to creating a sustainable and strategic business plan that aligns its resources with its mission and priorities as informed by the Strategic University Plan, and it remains committed to its students and its obligations under its collective agreements.

AU continues to engage in a series of program reviews as part of its quality assurance process. Each review has provided an opportunity to reflect on the structure, strengths and challenges of the program in question and to assess how well it meets the needs of students and employers. The university will move forward this year in implementing a new academic structure that will result in its reorganization into four faculties. Greater program integration at the undergraduate and graduate levels is also anticipated. The institutional review process continues this year with a comprehensive self study to be carried out in preparation for seeking re-accreditation through the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and in preparation for development of the university's next Strategic Plan. As in previous reviews, additional opportunities for improvement should be identified.

AU reconfirmed its commitment to maintaining the fiscal integrity of the institution through the budget process this year. In order to compensate for current and expected shortfalls resulting from external forces beyond its control and the possibility of a lack of additional funding from the Government of Alberta, the university has reallocated funds from across the institution to areas of higher need (See details on pages 30-35).

Other key variables, including fluctuating enrolment, Alberta Tuition Fee Policy limitations and highly competitive post-secondary educational services, will continue to impact AU. Nationwide demographic shifts, changing technologies and the ongoing need for program growth, together with initiatives aimed at diversifying funding sources, are also affecting planning. Many of these challenges are, however, related to opportunities for growth and development.

Funding and Affordability

Accessibility, quality of education and affordability for students are paramount to AU. The \$42.3 million which AU expects to receive from the Government of Alberta in 2009-10 represents 34.6 per cent of proposed operating revenue. Although provincial government funding has allowed the university to meet a number of goals, the challenge of maintaining program quality in a new and increasingly technological and sophisticated e-learning environment while keeping fees competitive reached a critical point this year.

As emphasized in last year's Business Plan, to ensure that the university can meet its post-secondary mandate, an increase in funding is required to cover the university's growing indirect costs. A careful analysis completed for last year's plan revealed that AU requires \$15 million per year to cover unfunded indirect costs. Budget discussions this year confirmed that, if this additional funding is not forthcoming in the coming fiscal year, AU will be unable to maintain its programs and services to students at their current levels and will be forced to make cuts. In the interim, many of the enhancements identified as critical to serving the needs of students have been deferred until grant funding increases. Therefore, achieving appropriate and equitable funding levels from government remains the university's top priority.

Tuition is a major barrier to education for many prospective students. Providing opportunities for Albertans to access university education regardless of geographic location, culture, race, ethnicity, income, disability or educational background is fundamental to AU's identity and mandate and is explicitly endorsed in the Government of Alberta's strategic documents. The university is working hard to increase funding from external sources and has, in each of the past three years, allocated funds received through the Access to the Future Fund's Renaissance Fund Program, its operating funds and its donations to enhancing student awards and bursaries.

Fifty per cent of AU revenue is derived from tuition and student fees. In this context, and given the state of the economy, tuition affordability continues to be a serious responsibility not only for AU but for the Government of Alberta as well. As more and more workers and high-school graduates return to school because of the recession, layoffs or the lack of employment opportunities, and as they are turned away from conventional universities because of capacity limitations, AU can supply the Government of Alberta with a cost effective option for providing educational opportunities for these prospective students.

AU continues to work closely with representatives of Advanced Education and Technology on changes in the funding framework for post-secondary institutions, on its need for capital technology funding and on the annual operating lift requested in last year's Business Plan.

A Flexible, High Quality, Innovative Learning Environment

Through its budget discussions, AU has confirmed the need to continue to invest in the student experience by enhancing course delivery through information technology systems development and the currency of its courses.

Information and communication technology is integral to the university's learning delivery and student support systems. Technology removes barriers and makes AU accessible to those in rural and remote areas and those unable to attend live lectures because of work, disability or community or family commitments, enabling their full participation in the knowledge economy. Technology is as integral to AU's learning model as classrooms and laboratories are to that of a conventional, residential university.

As reported in last year's Business Plan and Annual Report, AU aspires, over the next decade, to further develop the Open Learning Environment, a virtual campus through which course delivery can be tailored to meet students' individual needs and learning styles. The environment will be characterized by innovations such as

- seamless and timely learner support
- virtualized access to multimedia learning materials
- vitalized content creation, storage and retrieval through a centralized content management system
- collaborative social technologies and real-time information access

AU continues to work on the development and implementation of the Open Learning Environment. To date, the university has invested \$4 million of the \$10 million it committed to the project, but it still requires \$80 million from external sources to fully realize this visionary learning environment. In May 2008, a detailed \$80 million proposal was submitted to the Government of Alberta, outlining a 10-year plan for funding the development of the Open Learning Environment. The component parts of the plan were grouped into individualized, self-contained projects, allowing development to be divided into projects of manageable scope and size unfolding in an appropriate sequence.

The lack of an infusion of capital in the coming fiscal year will jeopardize AU's ability to deliver online courses both now and in the future, the quality of its courses and, thus, its ability to meet the needs of Alberta students for flexible, quality learning. In other words, it will limit the university's potential to realize its mandate of removing barriers to university-level education and to contribute to Campus Alberta. Facing such a significant challenge will, in turn, diminish the university's ability to help Alberta solve problems related to achieving the educated work force it needs, for example, in critical areas such as education and nursing.

Enrolment and Emerging Markets

Unlike other Alberta post-secondary institutions, which have experienced a flattening or decline in undergraduate enrolment by Alberta students, AU's most significant undergraduate enrolment growth during the past year has been among Alberta students, the total increasing at a rate of approximately five per cent. Overall growth in undergraduate programs has slowed somewhat from the exponential rate of expansion experienced during most of the past decade; however, indications point to continued steady undergraduate enrolment growth, in the range of five per cent per year, over the next four years.

Graduate programs continue to expand. Robust growth is expected in the recently launched Doctor of Business Administration program and in the Doctor of Education (distance education), the Master of Health Studies, the Master of Nursing, the Master of Counselling and the Master of Business Administration programs. Growth in all graduate programs is projected at eight per cent in 2009-10 and at an average of eight per cent per year over the next four years.

AU's Enrolment Management Committee was established in 2007-08 to ensure that all aspects of the university's enrolment system are personally supportive and institutionally effective in attracting students and retaining them to course and program completion. The committee spent much of the past year seeking input from across the university through three separate channels: by engaging in direct consultation with front-line staff, by soliciting ideas through an email alias and by monitoring student feedback from the university website and AskAU.

The committee, co-chaired by the vice-president (academic) and the vice-president (advancement), is now working at two levels to resolve immediate problems that have been identified and to develop longer term plans for enhancing the planning and co-ordination of services, resources and activities to meet AU's enrolment targets. This work will continue in support of AU's mandate to eliminate barriers to higher education.

Urban Professional Market

The majority of AU's students will continue to be drawn from urban areas, particularly Calgary and Edmonton. Indeed, the dominance of this group in the student population is likely to increase owing to the current economic recession. Many under-educated young men, in particular, who deferred their post-secondary education to accept high paying jobs in the oil industry are expected to now turn their attention to education. Similarly, professional employees, conscious of workplace instability in these times, are likely to take a renewed interest in enhancing or upgrading their marketable skills. The university will continue to concentrate on serving these important primary markets and will continue to work with its Campus Alberta partners to ensure that educational opportunities are available to all students.

Rural Communities

Alberta's rural communities continue to shrink as their young people migrate to urban centres, and post-secondary completion rates for rural and remote communities are also among the lowest in the province. The shortage of skilled professionals in rural and northern communities particularly affects oil, gas, forestry and agricultural industries, which together account for 25 per cent of the province's gross domestic product.

Through building appropriate partnerships, AU will enable more Albertans to remain in their home communities while accessing post-secondary education. Achieving this goal will, in turn, help to ensure the sustainability of smaller communities and facilitate their future growth. AU is well positioned to provide access to high quality post-secondary programs for rural and northern Albertans through online and distance learning and will continue to work on developing access for these communities through its Learning Communities Project.

Aboriginal Communities

Despite recent improvements, both employment rates and post-secondary completion rates among Aboriginal Albertans, both on and off reserves, remain low. AU's longstanding collaborative agreements with First Nations colleges and councils will continue to promote equality of access. The university's Centre for World Indigenous Knowledge and Research also continues to develop outreach initiatives, and the university is working directly with the Yellowhead Tribal College, Blue Quills First Nations College, Red Crow Community College and the Sunrise Project at Northern Lakes College to develop and implement programs and services. This collaborative approach will continue as AU works with Alberta's Aboriginal Peoples to enhance access to and success in post-secondary education.

Migration and Immigration

Though the competition for skilled workers migrating from other provinces or immigrating from other countries has been lessened by the economic downturn, Alberta is, nevertheless, home to a very high percentage of workers whose roots are in other provinces or countries. AU is unique among the province's universities in being able to address the educational needs of this sector of the population. The university's research and development work in using mobile learning technologies in English-as-a-Second-Language programs continues. AU remains committed to establishing a presence in the immigrant population by working with communities and other

institutions to offer culturally sensitive university-level programs and to develop a better and more comprehensive system of assessing prior learning and experience.

Experiential Learning

AU plays a key role in Campus Alberta by ensuring that seamless learning opportunities are available for all Alberta students. By offering Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition and transfer credits and anywhere, any time delivery for students, the university challenges the commonly held assumptions about what learning is and how it is recognized, who learners are and what constitutes the learning system.

Like Campus Alberta, AU is a leading proponent of recognizing learning not only when it leads to credentials (formal learning), but also when it does not (informal learning). This recognition encourages participation in learning, eliminates some of the barriers faced by students and allows students to choose their own paths to learning. AU is a world-leader in Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR), and it will continue to create awareness of this option.

Focus on Research, Teaching and Scholarly Communication

Through its budget process this year, AU has made a commitment to ensuring the university's academic vitality by positioning it for continued growth and development. Decisions made recognize and support the role of innovative and leading edge projects that enhance AU's reputation for quality and excellence in research, teaching and scholarly communication.

The university has invested in a number of innovative projects over the last few years and will continue to maintain its course in order to realize a return on these initial investments. While new requests that promise strengthened academic vitality and innovation have been approved this year, many are dependent on the availability of external funding. This inability to provide funding represents a significant challenge as the continued delay of mission critical projects will jeopardize the university's ability to meet its mandate for distance delivery.

Funds made available to AU through the Government of Alberta's visionary Access to the Future Fund, particularly the Renaissance Fund Program, continue to be invaluable to AU in initiating several important and innovative scholarly communication projects and in leveraging key research opportunities. As the university's capacity to raise funds grows, pressure from donors for AU to have access to matching funds commensurate with that increased capacity is anticipated.

Expanding Programs in Response to Economic, Market and Community Dynamics

AU regularly monitors its course and program offerings in response to student demand and changing labour market conditions, economic developments and community dynamics. Over the next two years, a number of existing programs are expected to grow as a result of demand and open access, and several new programs are slated to open.

Demand driven expansion is anticipated in the following programs:

- 2009-10: Doctor of Business Administration, Doctor of Education (distance education), Master of Nursing (general/teaching), Master of Health Studies

(leadership/teaching), Bachelor of Management (Indigenous) and BPA (criminal justice)

- 2010-11: Doctor of Business Administration, Doctor of Education (distance education), Master of Nursing (general/teaching), Master of Health Studies (leadership/teaching), and Bachelor of Management (Indigenous)

Recruitment and Retention of Staff

Recruitment, retention and negotiation of affordable collective agreements are ongoing challenges for AU. More employees are needed to serve increasing numbers of students, yet many qualified scholars are expected to retire in the next decade, and the university is facing increased competition in renewing its academic and professional staff.

AU recognizes the importance of continuing to attract and retain highly qualified employees to maintaining its first-ranked status and is finding creative solutions to staff shortages in the most rapidly growing program areas such as business, life sciences, nursing and criminal justice.

AU was selected as one of Alberta's top 40 employers for 2009 by Mediacorp Canada Inc., publishers of *Canada's Top 100 Employers*. The award bears testimony to the innovative and progressive AU work environment and will help attract and retain high quality employees. The annual regional ranking, conducted in partnership with Alberta's two largest newspapers, the *Calgary Herald* and the *Edmonton Journal*, recognizes "the Alberta employers that lead their industries in offering exceptional places to work." The criteria considered in evaluating employers included the organization's leadership in its industry in attracting and retaining quality employees and the organization's ability to offer good job prospects.

STRATEGIC GOALS AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

STRATEGIC GOALS

The goals articulated in the Strategic University Plan 2006-11 reflect Athabasca University's values, mission and mandate. Accomplishing those goals will represent a significant step toward fulfilment of the university's mission and strengthen its commitment to the principles of excellence, openness, flexibility and innovation underlying all of its operations. Over the remaining two years of the plan period, the university will continue to focus on achieving the plan goals:

- ensuring quality in learning
- enhancing open access
- focusing on quality research
- building communities
- recruiting and retaining excellent employees
- allocating resources

These goals are consistent with and supportive of the post-secondary access and quality measures of Alberta Advanced Education and Technology as revealed through the work of the Institutional Roles and Mandate Committee.

Goal 1: to continue to focus on the delivery of high quality open and distance education through a wide range of programs and courses

Strategic objectives	Expected results
Continue to strengthen the quality, accessibility and responsiveness of undergraduate and graduate courses and programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent student satisfaction ratings and improvement in some areas • Improvements in measures of student success • Undergraduate and graduate enrolment targets met • Program reviews as per the Education Review Plan continued • Increase in number of approved programs
Ensure that quality is enhanced and that access is not compromised as more course materials and learning activities move online. Adapt course development processes to the demands of e-learning, and develop ICT strategies responsive to student learning needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of available online courses increased • Technology for online delivery enhanced • New course development models consistent with advancements in online learning • A balanced curriculum • Improved student satisfaction ratings

Continue to offer a high quality student experience at Athabasca University.

- Student satisfaction ratings maintained
- Trend in exceeding provincial average in student satisfaction ratings continued
- Improved student supports, including technology usage
- Improvements in measures of student success

Continue to develop a digital and resource library that will meet the needs of students and researchers.

- Increased digital collections
- Improved student information literacy rates
- Increased use of digital materials
- Technology enhanced

Goal 2: to increase participation rates at Athabasca University and ensure accessibility for students from diverse regions and backgrounds

Strategic objectives

Expected results

Recruit a diverse and wide-ranging group of undergraduate students from all sectors and provinces and abroad to major programs.

- Marketing and recruitment efforts enhanced
- Specified undergraduate enrolment targets met
- Increased undergraduate course registration
- Enhanced opportunities for rural/remote students

Recruit a diverse and wide-ranging group of graduate students from all sectors and provinces and abroad to major graduate programs.

- Marketing and recruitment efforts enhanced
- Specified graduate enrolment targets met
- Increased graduate course registration
- Enhanced opportunities for rural/remote students

Increase opportunities for access to university-level education for students from northern, rural, minority, Aboriginal and other under-represented communities across Canada.

- Enhanced marketing and recruitment efforts directed to under-represented groups
- Increased enrolment from rural and remote areas
- Increase in partnerships and funding

Continue to be a major contributor to Campus Alberta, to build strong alliances with other post-secondary institutions and to increase availability of university-level education provincially, nationally and internationally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in number of partnerships and collaborative arrangements • Existing partnerships maintained
Develop a more co-ordinated approach to addressing learner needs and improving student success and better supports for students to achieve their learning goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased use of student support services • Increase in number of learner support initiatives • Improved student satisfaction ratings • Improved completion rates
Improve financial support for students to reduce barriers to post-secondary education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased financial aid through scholarships and bursaries
Provide a wide range of dynamic services that support the diverse needs of students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in number of services critical to student success • Increased use of AskAU

Goal 3: to foster and expand research and scholarship at Athabasca University

Strategic objectives	Expected results
Continue to provide and increase appropriate support for student and staff excellence in research and scholarship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased research activity (funding, publications, projects) • Enhanced support services to researchers • Enhanced research facilities
Enhance Athabasca University's international reputation in open and distance learning scholarship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased international activity • Increase in number of research partnerships and collaborative arrangements • Increase in international registration
Expand the research culture throughout the university environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased research activity • Increased number of funded research chairs
Promote and expand the transfer of research knowledge for the benefit of society.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Athabasca University Press established • Increase in number of publications • Increased media for research
Provide the widest possible access to the research created by researchers at Athabasca University.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in number of publications • AU Press regarded as a leading open-access press

Increase research partnerships and collaborations with other internationally recognized research institutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in number of research partnerships and collaborations
Develop a clear funding strategy to seek and allocate research funding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in amount of research funding received

Goal 4: to promote collaboration and foster leadership in the communities we serve

Strategic objectives	Expected results
Raise the profile of Athabasca University as Canada's Open University provincially, nationally and internationally so that students, employers and governments will see it as their first choice for meeting their educational needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research profile increased in line with that of other universities • Awareness increased from benchmark (2006) • Increased student enrolment • Increased course registration • Increased media coverage • Increased outreach activities
Employ university resources in the community to develop initiatives and collaborative partnerships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the number/extent of community partnerships • Increase in the number of community events
Foster vital alliances with business and industry to advance mutually beneficial educational goals for employment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the number/extent of partnerships and alliances

Goal 5: to recruit and retain the very best staff

Strategic objectives	Expected results
Create an environment that supports Athabasca University's teaching and research priorities, increases recruitment and retention activities and ensures leadership succession.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased annual research production • Enhanced Human Resources services • Enhanced recruitment procedures • Improved working conditions for faculty/staff
Provide appropriate recognition and support for staff members in their role in the teaching and research mandate of the university.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased recognition of staff achievements • Increase in the number of awards • Increased publication of success stories

Improve collaboration and foster open dialogue, interpersonal networking and communication throughout the university.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AU staff portal successfully implemented • Increase in number of staff events • Enhanced internal publications • Enhancement of collaborative technologies
Strengthen governance and organizational structures within the university.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance and organizational structures reviewed and realigned in accordance with position as an established university

Goal 6: to secure and steward the resources necessary for Athabasca University and its staff and students to achieve their potential

Strategic objectives	Expected results
Align institutional planning and refine mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of university planning, resource allocation and institutional renewal process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted investment budgets established
Increase existing and identify new sources of funds to support research, teaching and service at the university.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased research links with government agencies and the private sector • Increased revenue from research activity • Increased revenue from advancement activities (grants, donations, strategic partnerships)

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

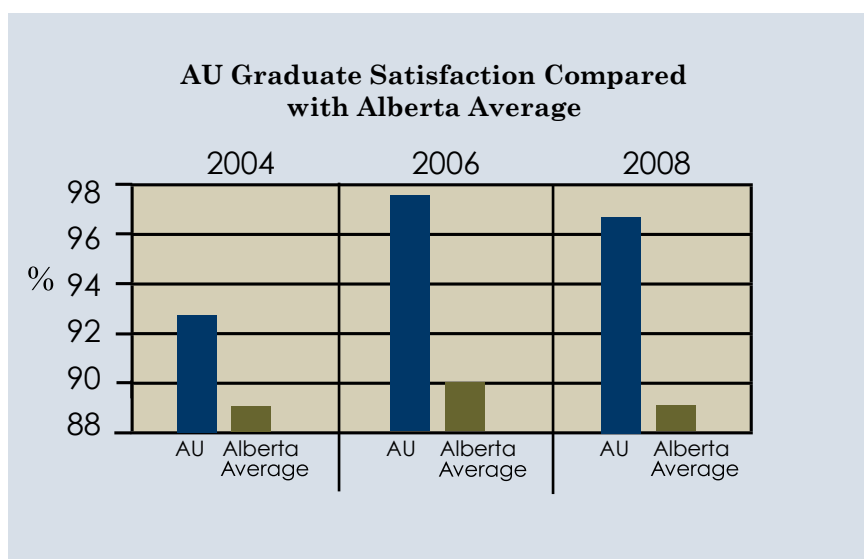
Enrolment: Expected and Targeted Full-load Equivalents (FLEs)

Athabasca University has established the following enrolment targets to aid its planning in support of its goal of satisfying learners' needs through open access to programs and courses. These targets reflect the expectation to grow, on average over the course of this plan, by approximately 300 full-load equivalents per year.

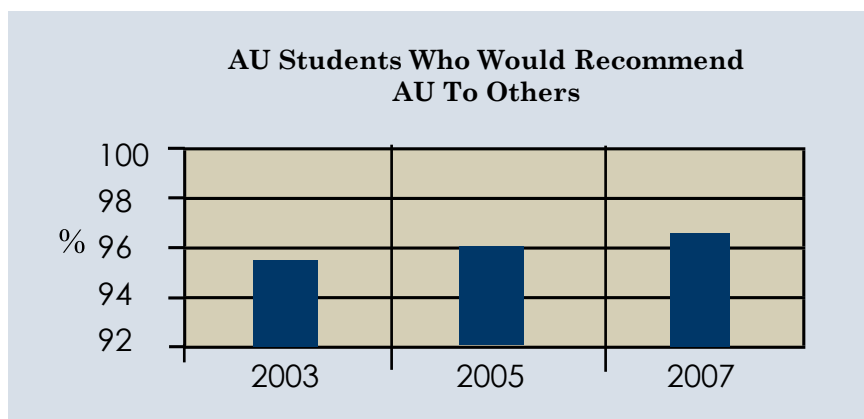
	2007-08 (Actual)	2008-09 (Expected)	2009-10 (Targeted)	2010-11 (Targeted)	2011-12 (Targeted)	2012-13 (Targeted)
Undergraduate	5,984	6,198	6,331	6,542	6,788	7,044
Graduate	1,209	1,324	1,417	1,516	1,592	1,671
Total FLEs (full-load equivalents)	7,193	7,522	7,748	8,058	8,380	8,715
Increase	10	329	226	310	322	335
Rate of enrolment growth	0.1%	4.6%	3.0%	4.0%	4.0%	4.0%

Graduate Satisfaction

In its value statements, AU indicates that student learning and satisfaction are measures of success. Very significantly, during a period of rapid growth, the university has maintained high levels of student satisfaction with the quality of the educational experience. AU consistently exceeds the provincial average level of satisfaction on the Government of Alberta's Alberta Graduate Outcome Survey. Results for the 2004, 2006 and 2008 surveys are provided below:

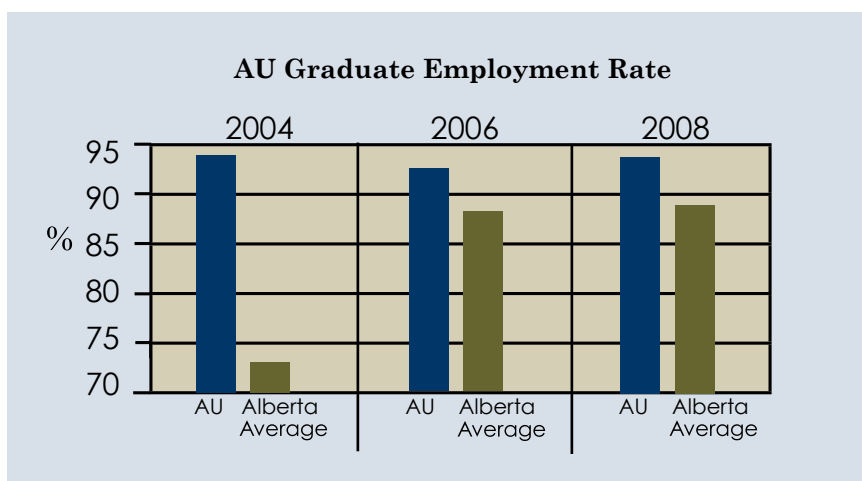


An increasing number of AU undergraduates indicate that they would recommend AU to others, as revealed in the Athabasca University Biennial Undergraduate Student Satisfaction Survey:



Graduate Employment Rate

Measures of student learning are embedded in the curriculum. That AU graduates consistently enjoy a very high rate of participation in the labour force is an indirect measure of the high quality of the university's programs. The following chart shows employment rates for AU graduates as revealed in the Alberta Graduate Outcome Survey:



It is also important to note that a majority of AU students participate in the labour force while completing their courses or programs: 81 per cent work while they study.

Student Consultation

The Athabasca University Executive meets regularly with representatives of the Athabasca University Students' Union and Athabasca University Graduate Students' Association to review the university's proposed and projected fee structures. The most recent meetings were held with the AUGSA on January 26, 2009, and with the AUSU on January 27, 2009. Both student groups are represented on the university's Strategic Budget Committee, Academic Council, Finance Committee and Governing Council.

Research Activities

AU maintains its commitment to excellence in research and scholarship. Through discovery, dissemination and transfer of new knowledge, the university will continue to integrate research and creative activity with teaching, thereby informing its curriculum and providing opportunities for highly qualified graduates to promote innovation and to participate more fully in society.

As a university with a growing graduate student population, now over 3,200 strong, AU will continue to ensure that the research and publication records of academic staff members are comparable to those of other public universities in Canada. Data on research activities performed the past several years is presented in the following tables.

Research Impact – All Sources (thousands of dollars)

A summary of all external research funding (in thousands of dollars) is provided in the following table. External funding from the granting councils has shown a downward trend in recent years; however, support from community and industry sources has increased slightly.

Types of Research Support	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	Three-Year Average 2005-07	Three-Year Average 2006-08
Total sponsored research revenues ¹	\$1,849	\$2,117	\$2,509	\$2,094	\$2,158
Support from council sources ²	\$709	\$642	\$466	\$692	\$606
Council support ratio (council sources/total sponsored research revenue)	38.3%	30.3%	18.6%	33.3%	29.1%
Support from community and industry sources ³	\$1,141	\$1,475	2,043	\$1,403	\$1,553
Community and industry support ratio (community and industry/total sponsored research revenue)	61.7%	69.7%	81.4%	66.7%	70.9%

¹ 2006-07 figures onward include cash as well as in-kind contributions as recorded in the Audited Financial Statements.

² Council sources includes Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) and Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), including Canadian Graduate Scholarships, and Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and Canada Research Chairs and indirect costs (federal).

³ Includes other federal, provincial, and industry funding from sources such as the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI), Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) and Office of Learning Technologies (OLT).

Sponsored Research Revenue as a Percentage of Provincial Grants

Sponsored research revenue (in thousands of dollars) as a percentage of provincial operating grants is summarized in the following table. As the table shows, the percentage increase has risen slightly over the past three years.

Types of Research Support	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	Three-Year Average 2005-07	Three-Year Average 2006-08
Total sponsored research revenues	\$1,849	\$2,117	\$2,509	\$2,094	\$2,158
Total Province of Alberta operating grants	\$30,113	\$31,064	\$34,211	\$28,876	\$31,796
Sponsored research revenues as a percentage of provincial operating grants	6.1%	6.8%	7.3%	7.3%	6.7%

Research Council Success

AU's success rate with its applications to the granting councils is summarized in the following table. Of note is the increase in the number of applications being submitted. The success rate over the past three years has risen slightly from 23 per cent to 29 per cent in 2007-08.

Granting Councils ¹	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	Three-Year Average 2005-07	Three-Year Average 2006-08
Number of applications	21	31	34	26	29
Number of awards	5	7	10	6	7
Total value of awards (in thousands of dollars)	\$709	\$642	\$466	\$692	\$606

¹ Includes Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) and Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), including graduate scholarships, and Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). Also includes Canada Research Chairs and indirect costs, but not Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI), Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC), Office of Learning Technologies (OLT), Industry Canada, etc.

Research Publications and Other Creative Works

Faculty and staff members actively disseminate their research findings through various publications and presentations. The following table provides a summary of these activities (Note: Numbers for previous years have been amended to reflect definitions from granting agencies.)

Research Publications ¹	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	Three-Year Average 2005-07	Three-Year Average 2006-08
Number of full-time faculty ²	142	162	173	138	159
Books authored or co-authored	61	49	63	50	58
Books edited or co-edited	8	12	16	7	12
Articles in refereed publications	146	203	149	156	166
Non-refereed publications	40	35	38	36	38
Conference presentations	296	306	361	272	321

¹ Books authored or co-authored include chapters authored or co-authored. Refereed articles include refereed journals and conference proceedings. Conference presentations include invited speaking engagements.

² The number of full-time teaching staff is as reported to Statistics Canada through the University Full-time Teaching Staff System for the period and includes teaching staff employed as of October 1 of the reporting year and research staff who have an academic rank and salary scale similar to teaching staff, appointed on a full-time basis, whose term of appointment is not less than 12 months (including staff members on leave).

Research Highlights

The following highlights are indicators of AU's ongoing research activity:

- Approval was granted, effective July 1, 2008, by iCore for an Industry Chair in Adaptivity and Personalization, to complement the university's existing XEROX chair held by Dr. Kinshuk of the School of Computing and Information Systems. This award, valued at \$760,000 over five years, is being used to support the chair and to advance research on the innovative paradigms, architectures and implementations of wireless learning applications and systems for individualized and adaptive learning.
- In January 2009, Dr. Dragan Gasevic of the School of Computing and Information Systems was awarded a Canada Research Chair in semantic technologies. Gasevic's research is focused on developing a set of novel semantic technologies that will allow for unique ways of knowledge sharing with the goal of helping learners and educators in many key aspects such as user-user and user-content interaction, personalization and context-awareness. At the same time, it will support software engineers in developing software systems that better understand and respond to user needs. In collaboration with leading academic and industrial researchers, this research will train a pool of highly qualified software engineers and educational technologists in semantic technologies and provide educational institutions, high tech industries and government organizations with novel semantic technologies to produce innovative synergies among various types of knowledge resources and software services.
- Dr. Jeffrey Vallance of the Centre for Nursing for Health Studies is lead investigator for Facilitating Physical Activity Behaviour and Health Outcomes in Breast Cancer Survivors Receiving Chemotherapy, A Practical Behavioural Trial, an exercise study that has received \$187,000 in funding, over three years, from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. Together with colleagues at the University of Alberta, the University of Calgary, the Alberta Cancer Board and the Medicine Hat Cancer Centre, Vallance will study the effects of physical exercise on the recovery of breast cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy. The study will involve 290 participants in Medicine Hat, Lethbridge and Calgary.

- Dr. Dragan Gasevic became the first AU faculty member to receive a New Faculty Award from Alberta Ingenuity. The New Faculty Awards provide start-up support, primarily operating funds, to outstanding new faculty members who are in their first academic appointment at an Alberta university or college. Gasevic has been awarded \$288,860 over three years, beginning September 1, 2008, in support of his project Model Driven Development of Families of Semantically-enabled Service-oriented Architectures.
- Dr. Fuhua Lin of the School of Computing and Information Systems will receive \$75,000 in funding, over five years, from the Natural Science and Engineering Research Council for his research project Developing Reasoning Capabilities for Intelligent Agents that Facilitate Adaptive Learning. This project will highlight a new methodology for formalizing the reasoning models and mechanisms for the agents of adaptive learning systems (AL systems).
- Dr. Ken Munyikwa of the Centre for Science was awarded \$75,000 in Natural Science and Engineering Research Council funding, over five years, for his project Late Wisconsinan and Holocene Depositional Chronologies of Aeolian Sands in Central and Northern Alberta: Implications for Deglaciation Patterns and Environmental Evolution. The project will examine samples of sand from dune structures in central and northern Alberta containing depositional sequences longer than any investigated in the area to date. The collected samples will be dated using luminescence dating techniques to provide depositional chronologies. The results will be compared with data collected in southern Alberta and across the Canadian prairies to reveal patterns in environmental change over the last 20,000 years. Such medium range data on climate change will help put the current global warming debate into context.
- In the fall of 2008, AU, in partnership with Alberta-North, initiated Best Practices for Attracting and Retaining Learners from Under-represented Populations. This collaborative project, funded by a \$327,000 grant from the Access to the Future Fund's Innovation Fund Program, will investigate and evaluate northern and rural Community Access Points' (CAP sites) activities aimed at attracting and preparing students from under-represented populations to participate and succeed in distance and online educational programs, identifying effective practices and noting how technology is used to support these practices. The project will also identify barriers to participation and develop new strategies and services to reduce or overcome those obstacles, investigate the effectiveness and appropriateness of using synchronous and asynchronous learning technologies and test and evaluate a minimum of three strategies and make recommendations regarding their implementation into the Alberta-North CAP services network. The project will involve the seven Alberta-North institutions and a majority of their 80 CAP sites. Three southern rural colleges, educational consortia associated with participating colleges and numerous Community Adult Learning Councils within these regions will also be invited to participate.
- *The Journal of Distance Education and The International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning* have been selected for inclusion in the European Reference Index for the Humanities initial list. These two scholarly journals, published by AU Press, have become leaders in the field of open and distance education. Dr. Terry Anderson of the Centre for Distance Education was appointed to the editorial review boards of both journals. Anderson also received a SSHRC grant in support of the *International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning*.
- Dr. Evelyn Ellerman has received an Alberta Women's Institute grant in support of the first book length analysis of the Alberta Women's Institute's role in rural women's civic leadership. The book will be published online by AU Press.
- Sixteen Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, 11 Natural Science and Engineering Research Council, and four Canadian Institute for Health Research grant applications were submitted to the national competitions in the fall 2008.

PRIORITIES AND SUPPORT NEEDS

PRIORITIES FOR 2009-13

The ongoing economic crisis has made the budget process for 2009-10 the most difficult of the last five years. While Athabasca University has seen a significant reduction in its investment income and has been presented with funding challenges, it still must meet its contractual obligations. As importantly, the university must make the changes required to ensure that it not only delivers quality programs to its students, but that students have access to those programs. AU's information and communication technology systems require an external capital investment of \$80 million in addition to the \$10 million that has been allocated from reserves. The university also remains committed to working with government to increase its annual operating grants to be more reflective of the true costs of its programs and to creating a multi-year, sustainable and strategic budget plan that aligns resources with its mission and priorities as articulated in the Strategic University Plan 2006-11.

The overarching goal of the proposed 2009-10 budget is to maintain excellence in teaching and research and to continue to ensure student access and program affordability while positioning the university to work toward balanced budgets and rebuilding reserves for investment in the next Strategic University Plan. Continuation of permanent employment is also a high priority in the coming fiscal year.

All budget decisions, including those supporting budget reallocations, align with the university's mission, mandate and goals as articulated in the Strategic University Plan. Budget decisions for the coming fiscal year were based on the following principles:

- **Accessibility, quality and affordability of educational opportunities for students are paramount:** AU will continue to invest in the student experience by enhancing course delivery through systems development (ICT) and updating courses. Requests to further enhance student services and update courses have been prioritized and will be funded from additional operating resources when requested funding becomes available. Student non-tuition fee structures were reviewed in the context of affordability and increases will be kept to a minimum.
- **The academic vitality of the university must be ensured:** Innovative and leading edge projects, such as the proposed Project Management Research Institute and the SUN Microsystems Centre of Excellence, aimed at enhancing AU's reputation for quality and excellence in research, teaching and scholarly communication will be maintained wherever possible. New requests for such project funding have been prioritized and approved subject to the availability of external funding.
- **AU's fiscal integrity must be maintained while positioning the university to meet its Strategic University Plan goals, which focus on continued growth and development:** AU will reinvest to support the changes expected as a result of external forces beyond its control (e.g., changes in course registration or external funding) and anticipate how it will achieve future efficiencies. Activities that strengthen the university's role as a comprehensive university and add

revenue, such as research, student recruitment and fund development, must be maintained and supported. Existing reserves must be used to the best advantage. Given the university's exposure, due to its high percentage of non-program students, to a higher risk of enrolment fluctuations, a minimum reserve balance must be maintained to allow for such fluctuations. The university must also accumulate sufficient reserves to allow it to develop new programs and other initiatives.

- **People are important to the university:** To the extent possible, AU will endeavour to maintain its workforce. For the coming year, the university has decided to reallocate its budgets rather than lay off staff.

To compensate for current and expected shortfalls from slower growth in tuition revenues, smaller grant increases from government and lower investment returns, AU will reallocate funds from across the university to the areas of strategic and highest need. To ensure that Strategic University Plan goals are met, each executive division was asked to reduce its permanent budgets by three to five per cent for reallocation or reinvestment in academic priorities, priorities that will have a direct impact on services and programming to students. The Office of the Chief Information Officer reallocated \$697,000, the equivalent of nine per cent of its current base budget, toward other key investment areas within the university, and the Office of the President, the Office of the Vice-President (Advancement), the Office of the Vice-President (Finance and Administration) each contributed approximately five per cent. The result is a significant shift of resources from administrative services to academic programs and student services.

Office of the Vice-President (Academic)

In keeping with AU's commitment to academic vitality, the academic areas will receive a substantial portion of the university's overall reallocation, close to \$1 million in additional funds in total, exclusive of salaries and benefits, as outlined below.

SUP Goal 1: Ensuring Excellence in Learning

Ensuring quality focuses on four areas: program planning, course development, course management and student services. Reallocation has ensured some continued investment to support new program development with \$590,000 being reallocated for use in the undergraduate centres and \$130,000 in the graduate centres. Continued reinvestment in course revision is essential to ensure that courses are consistent with the norms of contemporary pedagogy and online design. Course management activities, particularly as courses move online, will be reviewed to reduce costs.

While support departments, specifically the Library and Institutional Studies, did not receive additional resources, library subscriptions will be maintained, and a copyright assistant is proposed to help reduce service delays. The university will continue to seek to increase availability of resources in these areas through improved practices, administrative efficiencies and grant opportunities.

SUP Goal 2: Enhancing Open Access

The major focus of open access is in student recruitment and retention. A \$200,000 reallocation will target initiatives which will immediately enhance student services and reduce unnecessary administrative handling. In particular, the funds will focus on expediting the evaluation of transfer credits and on resolving examination issues.

SUP Goal 3: Focusing on Excellence in Research

The Athabasca River Basin Research Institute and the Technology Enhanced Learning Research Institute have taken the lead with respect to increasing research capacity. In addition to Tri-Council and Canada Foundation for Innovation funding proposals (approximately \$2.8 million), TELRI currently houses two Canada Research Chairs with funding for up to five years, along with the iCORE/Xerox/Markin Industrial Research Chair in Adaptivity and Personalization in Informatics (\$1.7 million in total). ARBRI is in the process of negotiating support from various philanthropic sources. A third institute, the Project Management Research Institute, will be created, with external support, in the next fiscal year as part of the Centre for Innovative Management.

A SUN Microsystems Centre of Excellence has just been announced. A preliminary project for this centre will be a social networking study supported by \$200,000 in Renaissance Fund Program funding. A further \$700,000 is being requested from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Council of Canada. Other initiatives include a Canada Foundation for Innovation proposal for an astronomical observatory (\$1.6 million). A new Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Studies has been allocated to AU (approximately \$600,000) as well as a Canadian Institute for Health Research grant in the amount of \$188,000.

SUP Goals 4 and 5: Building Communities and Recruiting and Retaining Excellent People

Work continues on policy processes in line with the new organizational and governance structures. In particular, this restructuring will involve realignment of workloads to achieve greater workload equity across the academy, reorganization and co-ordination of course administrative tasks and realignment and co-ordination of unit budgets.

In terms of new positions, one new position was approved for the Centre for Nursing and Health Studies to compensate for an existing position that was transferred to the Centre for State and Legal Studies, and one was approved for the School of Computing and Information Systems as external funding has been secured. One additional new position was approved for the architecture program, as part of AU's agreement with the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, but this position is on hold until the program is confirmed. A part-time elder position, to be funded from existing centre resources, was approved in the Centre for World Indigenous Knowledge and Research. An institutional research officer and a support position for the Centre for Integrated Studies were also approved.

Office of the Vice-President (Finance and Administration)

The Office of the Vice-President (Finance and Administration) received no reallocation funding but did allocate over \$1 million for use in other areas of the institution. It will however, still be able to achieve many of its Strategic University Plan objectives.

SUP Goal 3: Focusing on Excellence in Research

To preserve significant Athabasca regional, Alberta and Canadian historical records and artifacts, the university plans to enhance records management and archival collections resources and services. In conjunction with two academic centres, implementation of a four-year internship program in records management and archival studies is also planned.

SUP Goal 5: Recruiting and Retaining Excellent People

A classification system review will be completed, and disability management services are being consolidated. Further, a staff development plan will be completed, and targeted staff development initiatives will be undertaken.

SUP Goal 6: Allocating Resources

To achieve the reallocation target several measures will be taken, including terminating leases for unused space, deferring hiring of an operations manager for the Academic and Research Centre building until provincial operating funding is available, disestablishing two vacant positions, suspending the Athabasca-Edmonton shuttle service during July and August, reducing investment management fees and working with academic centres to identify cost savings related to course materials production and distribution.

Office of the Vice-President (Advancement)

The Advancement Office contributed almost \$300,000 (five per cent) of its permanent budget to the reallocation fund. No new positions have been requested for this or subsequent years. Additional workloads have been reallocated among existing staff members. Contract monies have been reduced in the marketing and development areas. Savings have also been realized by curtailing internal and external university events and travel across the division. To the extent possible, external funding will be sought for university events.

One-time funding provided last year for recruitment and marketing was approved for one additional year. In addition to a wide range of activities undertaken by this division, major activities include the following.

SUP Goal 2: Enhancing Open Access

Permanent budgets have been realigned to support the work of the Enrolment Management Committee, particularly in the recruitment area. The national Stand Out advertising campaign continues to drive prospective students to AU's website. As of January 30, 2009, more than 18,000 new undergraduate students had registered for AU courses during the 2008-09 fiscal year, and over 950 graduate students had been admitted into AU's graduate programs. Recurring funding of \$375,000 will allow the campaign to be refreshed and expanded for one more year and will also allow the Advancement Office to continue to work directly with academic centres on targeted recruitment advertising initiatives for key programs. Approximately \$125,000 will again be spent on university publications.

SUP Goal 4: Community Building

The Advancement Office will continue its comprehensive, multi-year plan to raise awareness of AU. Strategic reallocations will enhance activities that support the Strategic University Plan goal of raising the profile and reputation of the university with groups such as prospective students, all levels of government, funding agencies (including granting agencies and foundations and research councils), private and corporate donors, and urban and rural communities in Alberta, British Columbia and Ontario.

Office of the Chief Information Officer

The Office of the Chief Information Officer has provided nearly nine per cent of its base budget (\$697,000) for reallocation to the university's overall budget. This contribution has been made possible by extending evergreening of computers over a longer period. Other savings have been achieved through a review of licenses and maintenance contracts. As in previous years, funds from reserves, one-time funds and amortization dollars are also proposed to advance established information and communication technology projects.

In total, \$4.1 million of new technology projects are planned in 2009-10, of which \$2.1 million is planned from the reserve, \$1.3 from capital renewal (reinvestment of amortization) and \$700,000 from the Infrastructure Maintenance Program (IMP) grant.

SUP Goal 1: Ensuring Excellence in Learning

Learning systems modifications will enhance quality as more materials and activities are moved online:

- An upgrade to Moodle 1.9 will enhance functionality through integration with social networking technologies, enhanced assignment drop box capabilities and the addition of improved wikis and blogs.
- An in-house developed random assignment generator will facilitate the randomization of course assignments to students, enabling online access to assessment.
- An online tutor and course evaluation system, replacing the existing cumbersome, slow and costly paper based system, will simplify data analysis and be more time sensitive.
- The addition of a learning management page in myAU will streamline access to course-related information and resources for course tutors, professors and co-ordinators.
- A new course tracking system, using Alfresco, will allow course developers to use workflow management tools to control the creation process, allowing for better management of resources and reduced course production times.
- The continued automation of the student admission process, particularly for student credit transfers, will provide more efficient service to students seeking admission to programs.

SUP Goal 2: Enhancing Open Access

The following activities will enhance accessibility:

- A new web-based system for managing student exam requests will automate exam data collection and greatly improve efficiencies and reporting capabilities.
- An automated admissions system, using Alfresco in combination with OCR technology, will improve workflow within the Office of the Registrar and between stakeholder groups and allow for the OCR of incoming transcripts from top transcript senders. It will also eliminate data entry and allow for desktop retrieval of student documents, improving service to students.

- A three-phase contact centre review process will update the interactive voice response system with a new voice and tree structure, amalgamate inbound calls into virtual queues through a virtual call centre and improve the data analysis and reporting of student contacts. These improvements will improve resource use and responsiveness to students.
- A review and upgrade of the Office of the Registrar's online system (OROS), based on expert and student focus group input, will improve the student experience and eliminate registration difficulties.
- An automated graduate admissions system, based on the system developed by the Graduate Centre for Applied Psychology, will standardize graduate admissions processes, improving reporting and integration with other AU systems.
- Merging the Banner student administration systems of the Centre for Integrated Management with that of the rest of the university will eliminate redundancy, enhance service to students and lay a foundation for integrated developments in the future.
- The APAS integration project, mandated by the Government of Alberta, will integrate AU's online registration system (OROS) to APAS to ensure effective and efficient student admission processes.

SUP Goal 3: Focusing on Excellence in Research

The following initiatives will support research:

- Integration with the Cybera high-performance computing network grid will allow AU researchers to benefit from access to significant computing resources and a community of researchers in their field.
- A dedicated WestGrid collaboration room, including VC capabilities, will be made available in Edmonton, allowing faculty members to fully participate in the West-Grid community.

SUP Goal 5: Recruiting and Retaining Excellent People

The following initiatives will support recruitment and retention:

- Desktop virtualization will enable ongoing cost reductions in equipment while also heightening data protection. Staff members will be able to access their workspace without having to have any preloaded software or information on their computer.
- Videoconferencing and SmartRoom enhancements will further improve connectivity and collaboration among AU community members and reduce travel requirements and costs.
- An enterprise storage system (Storage Array Network/Network Attached Storage – SAN/NAS) will provide a consolidated storage utility shared and accessed by many systems.
- Completion of the implementation of the Zimbra collaborative suite will provide a greatly enriched environment for communication and collaboration in the distributed workplace.

SUPPORT NEEDS

As mentioned above, AU has, over the past year, been working with representatives of Advanced Education and Technology to secure appropriate funding for its two primary support needs: investment in technological infrastructure and an increase to its annual operating grant to cover unfunded indirect costs. Appreciative of the work the ministry has done on these critical issues, the university looks forward to a positive resolution of both in the coming fiscal year.

Funding Equity in Post-secondary Education

As previously reported, AU's core operations result in cost structures which are different from those of conventional universities, and these differences need to be recognized in a new funding framework for post-secondary institutions. AU's unique delivery model has, over time, resulted in a structural inequity in government grant funding, an inequity which has been both hidden by and exacerbated by AU's exponential growth prior to 2008.

As enrolment has moderated, AU is no longer able to offset operating shortfalls with revenue generated by extraordinary growth. As part of the Funding Equity Review of Post-secondary Education, and as stated in last year's Business Plan, AU is requesting an annual operating grant lift of \$15 million. This request is in addition to present funding.² Additional annual funding is critical to ensure that the university is capable of meeting its mandate under the *Post-Secondary Learning Act*. Indeed, given AU's unique role in supporting the students and programs of other Alberta universities, its inability to meet its mandate would affect the ability of all Alberta universities to do so.

Careful analysis reveals \$15 million per year is the minimum required to cover unfunded indirect costs that have resulted over the past number of years, and these fall outside of the funding formula discussions now underway with government. Indirect costs do not increase evenly, but rather at incremental steps, which are defined by the university's capacity to support additional volume. By deferring investments in curriculum development, student services, information technology and facilities, the university has been able to survive. However, lack of sufficient investment in indirect costs is now a major issue and modernization is imperative. Other universities are able to fund indirect costs through a wide range of ancillary enterprises, but as a distance university, AU has limited opportunities to do so.

Funding shortfalls are imminent as the university draws down its reserve funds to cover costs resulting from the unfunded indirect costs that are no longer being offset by new growth. If additional funds cannot be secured to meet these real costs, the number and types of programs offered will have to be significantly reduced and student services curtailed. The focus, therefore, of the request for \$15 million to cover indirect costs is on curriculum development and student services, two areas that are critical to serving the needs of students.

Course Development Needs

To ensure that AU continues to offer a supportive, student-centred, world-leading learning environment, significant and immediate investments are needed in course development. While AU has been coping with rapid growth, the currency of its course inventory has been compromised. Only 58 per cent of the university's courses have been revised or updated in the last four years. The university has lacked the resources to revise the remainder. In addition, the Internet has changed the way learners interact with material.

² Should there be realignment of current funding, a further adjustment may be requested.

Twenty-first century learners want to select from a variety of learning materials, everything from textbooks to a broad range of online resources. As the core content of most AU courses is still largely textbook-based, almost all courses need to be redesigned and rewritten. Funding is therefore required to revise, redesign and keep courses current. Course development infrastructure excludes professional support, but includes instructional design, visual design, editing and multimedia.

This course development will support advanced pedagogy and respond to new learning methods and styles, particularly those motivated by mobile learning and other Internet 2.0 opportunities. All courses will henceforth be redesigned or substantially revised every four years, alternating between redesign and substantial revision. In addition, all courses will be updated annually, except for low enrolment undergraduate courses, which will be updated every two years. Further, the university anticipates 25 new and replacement courses to be developed each year. In all cases, exemplary learning materials must be developed to ensure curriculum excellence and student success.

In order for AU to revise, redesign and maintain the currency of all courses, course development support needs to increase to \$15.7 from \$6.2 million annually, an annual increase of \$9.7 million. This lift of \$14,600 per course (from \$9,400 to \$24,000 per course) is needed to ensure courses meet the diverse needs of twenty-first century learners.

Student Services Needs

To ensure that AU continues to offer a supportive, student-centred, learning environment, significant and immediate investments are also needed in student services. Students and their needs are changing rapidly, and the university must respond promptly and proactively to service their needs.

Changes in learner expectations and behavior are necessitating changes in student services. At present, few student services are customized for students and an industrial model is in place. This structure, which was necessary to gain efficiencies and cope with volumes and complexity, has served the university well. Unfortunately, however, it limits the university to providing services on a reactive (demand) basis—students receive advising, counselling or financial services, for example, only when they ask for them. This unacceptable situation is exacerbated by the fact that AU's student population typically includes a significant number of students from under-represented groups, many of whom are not initially prepared for university-level programming. Access to student support services is particularly important to the success of these students.

In responding to the needs of the new learner and increased complexity in the post-secondary market, AU needs to offer more open, flexible and innovative services customized for individual learners. To align student services with learner needs, the annual student services expenditure of \$8.2 million must be increased by \$5.3 million. This increase will permit the following student services enhancements:

- improved student orientation services for over 18,500 new students each year, especially those in programs
- examinations management
- improved articulation services and other registration services
- integration and enrichment of the Information Centre and call centre, help desk and admission, registration and academic records services
- professional and career counselling
- intelligent learner relationship management
- specialized student services, including financial aid, evaluations and degree audit,

- program articulation and awards
- collaborations and grouped study, study circles, college collaborations and high-school projects
- student choice monitoring and control, to vary learning resources, defer examinations, etc.

Information and Communication Technology

One key to AU's success has been its ability to serve the educational needs of dispersed learners who cannot afford, for economic or other reasons, to attend residential institutions. AU's business model has enabled this community of learners, without geographic focus, to access post-secondary learning.

Providing educational services to AU's community of learners depends upon the innovative use of technology to create a rich, flexible learning environment, one that is recognized by AU's peer institutions for its high standards. AU has succeeded in offering value to Alberta's and Canada's learners and has grown dramatically through its ability to leverage the accessibility and new approaches afforded by the Internet.

Over the past several years, however, AU has been increasingly challenged to maintain its leadership position in distance education through online learning. Globally competitive educational institutions are developing rapidly and investing in the sophisticated technology needed to provide ever improving learning and student service environments. This global competition represents a very real and imminent threat as Web 2.0 technology allows education providers to offer learners anywhere a high quality education at a competitive price. AU's reputation is formed within this global marketplace and the quality of its offerings is judged on a global scale. AU, Alberta and Canada cannot stand still but must act now to retain a competitive position and leadership standing in online learning.

Last year, with a view to maintaining its leadership position in online and distance education and enhancing the educational services it provides, AU updated its 2006-10 Capital Plan, readjusting its short- and long-term capital priorities, particularly with regard to technological infrastructure. To achieve its mandate and support strategic growth, the university must upgrade and expand its information and communication technology infrastructure.

The key to long-term success is investment in the university's information and communication technology infrastructure. AU's fundamental objectives in developing its ICT plan were to create an investment strategy that provides the university with a long-term vision, one which builds upon and enhances the institution's values and strengths, and a methodology through which to achieve it. Through the new provincial mandate, AU is responsible for leading post-secondary e-learning in Alberta. The proposed investment in ICT infrastructure will reaffirm that mandate and guarantee success.

The ICT planning process culminated in the vision of the Open Learning Environment, an innovative online post-secondary system in which cutting-edge technologies integrate with advanced pedagogical practice to form a supportive, student-centred, world-leading learning environment. The Open Learning Environment will encompass all aspects of the student's relationship with the university, from initial advising to lifelong learning and knowledge creation, establishing a new standard in post-secondary education.

AU's dependence on ICT is of a different magnitude than that of traditional campus-based institutions, as university operations rely entirely on an ICT enabled infrastructure. Nearly all AU students interact with the university through the Internet for both administrative and academic activities. AU's operations depend on

- the university website to create awareness and provide information
- online enrolment and course registration services
- online course delivery and instruction
- online assessment, including assignment and exam submission
- online student services for advising and assisting students and for maintaining students' academic records

Indeed, there is no alternative channel through which the university can deliver its services and programs. AU cannot substitute a campus building for its ICT infrastructure as the nature of the student body does not allow it. AU's uniqueness is characterized by

- continuous undergraduate enrolment: Students enrol in programs and start courses year round.
- self-paced study: Students complete courses on their own schedule.
- asynchronous delivery: Students do not have to attend lectures at appointed times: course materials are available at all times.
- distributed learning: Students do not have to receive course instruction or materials at a specific location: all materials are available on course home sites.

AU's ICT infrastructure must therefore provide students with continuous and reliable service in support of their academic success.

To continue to provide high quality teaching and student services, the university must reinvest in its core infrastructure for delivering instruction and service, namely ICT. Information and communication technology is AU's capital: its classrooms, meeting rooms, communication channels, knowledge repositories and workspaces. At AU, physical space is supplanted by virtual space, proximity by bandwidth and immediacy by asynchronicity.

The development of the Open Learning Environment is planned to unfold over 10 years at a total capital cost of \$90 million. An \$80 million investment has been requested from the Government of Alberta. As mentioned above, if no capital investment is forthcoming in the coming fiscal year, AU may be forced to abandon some of its plans for the Open Learning Environment, jeopardizing its ability to meet its mandate to remove barriers to university-level education by delivering online university courses and programs and meeting Albertans needs for flexible, quality learning options. Such an outcome would exacerbate capacity issues throughout Alberta's post-secondary environment.

ACCESSIBILITY/ENROLMENT PLAN

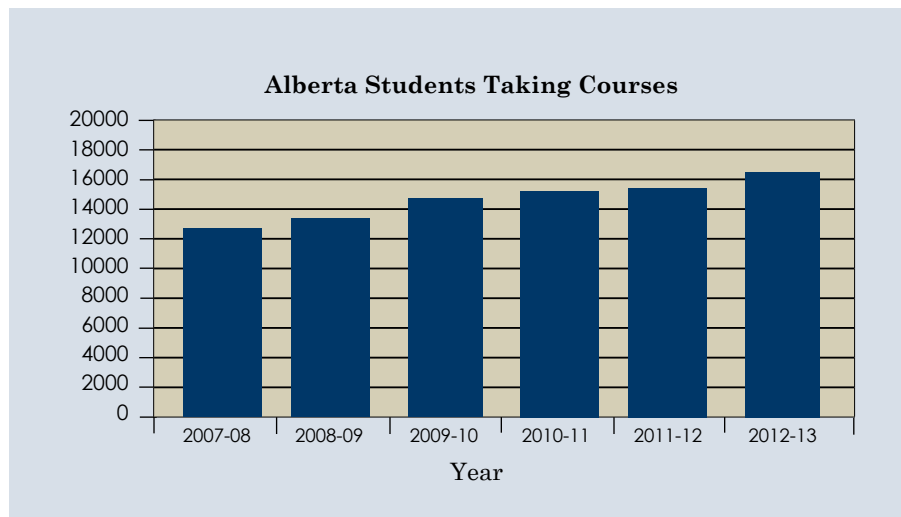
ENROLMENT

Athabasca University continues to grow. The university anticipates that total enrolment will grow by an average five per cent annually throughout the 2009-10 to 2012-13 planning period. The new focus on enrolment management, described above, will help to ensure this level of growth.

Increases are expected across the board in undergraduate and graduate enrolment. Some growth is also anticipated among non-credential undergraduate students, particularly students visiting from other universities.

Alberta Students

The number of Alberta residents taking courses through AU increased in 2008-09, growing by approximately five per cent, and it is targeted to grow by an average of approximately four per cent per year during the course of this four-year plan, as shown below:



ENROLMENT PLANNING ENVELOPE (EPE) FUNDED PROGRAMS

AU's accessibility plan includes meeting specific targets for programs that have received conditional funding. Programs are expected to reach their maintenance targets within the period covered by this business plan. EPE funded program targets are shown below.

	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
EPE 2008					
Doctor of Business Administration	3	14	24	33	39
Doctor of Education (distance education)	12	22	31	39	39
Master of Nursing (general/teaching)	10	20	26	26	26
Master of Health Studies (leadership/teaching)	5	10	14	14	14
Bachelor of Management (Indigenous nations and organizations)	5	10	15	20	20
EPE 2006					
Bachelor of Professional Arts (criminal justice)	40	50	50	50	50
Master of Nursing	30	40	40	40	40
Access Growth Fast Track 2005					
Bachelor of Nursing (LPN to BN)	47	47	47	47	47
Master of Counselling (portion of collaboration expansion)	17	17	17	17	17

NEW PROGRAMS

AU continues to develop new programs in response to the demonstrated educational needs of Albertans.

The following new programs began operations during the past year:

- Doctor of Education: distance education
- Master of Nursing: teaching emphasis
- Master of Arts – Integrated Studies: equity studies stream
- Graduate Diploma: heritage resources management
- Graduate Diploma: legislative drafting
- Graduate Diploma: instructional design
- Graduate Certificate: instructional design
- University Certificate: heritage resources management

Canada's first online Doctor of Business Administration degree program was approved by Alberta Advanced Education and Technology in July, 2008. The first intake of students is expected in April 2009.

AU plans to increase university access for Indigenous and northern Albertans by providing a supported university transition program in remote communities in two to three sites.

In addition, a number of new programs are at various stages in the planning and development process. Planned launch dates, dependent on funding, are as follows:

2009-10

Transition Program (pilot): A collaborative program to be offered at two to three northern sites. It will provide increased access to Indigenous and northern Albertans by providing a supported university transition program in remote communities.

Certificate in Adult Education (with Red Deer College): RDC and AU are jointly exploring the program in support of college instructional staff, particularly in the trades. The goal is to increase instructional and PLAR assessment capacities at RDC and other colleges.

Collaborative BA (with Medicine Hat College): This program will add to existing collaborative arrangements in support of MHC's mandate as a Comprehensive Community Institution.

Certificate in Computer Gaming Design: This undergraduate certificate will meet an industry need for gaming designers and provide a stepped or ladder entry opportunity for the Bachelor of Science in information science.

B.Sc. (architecture major) and Graduate Diploma in Architecture: These programs will replace those now offered by the national professional institute in architecture.

2010-11

PhD (nursing studies): Feasibility and curriculum development analysis are underway. Internal planning processes are set to begin.

BA (educational studies): This specialization is intended to address requests from students wanting courses in adult or early childhood education or learning disabilities.

M.Sc. (applied mathematics): This degree program will focus on mathematical modeling across various sectors and is increasingly required or preferred by those working with online planning databases.

BA (environmental studies) and B.Sc. (environmental sciences): These are increasingly important qualifications for those employed in public service and communication fields and those interested in advanced environmental studies.

Module development in professions (including ESL for professionals) and science and technology transition from high school (targeted at young men): Alberta's two most significant general labour market needs are in advancing the education and skills of members of the existing workforce and in transitioning high-school graduates to post-secondary training in preparation for skilled employment. These new online modules will offer small, approachable and achievable units of university course work to provide further education and, it is hoped, serve as the first step to program registration.

Cree, Blackfoot and Michif language preservation in collaboration with Red Crow Maskawachees and Tribal Councils: AU has approached a number of Indigenous leaders and institutions about developing language courses for and with their communities. The intention is to strengthen language and preserve culture.

2011 and Beyond

Nursing and Health Studies: B.Sc. or M.Sc. (health promotion) and PhD (applied psychology): AU is focusing on expansion in these areas in response to Alberta Health and

Wellness needs and Advanced Education and Technology's focus on providing greater numbers of skilled health care workers.

Indigenous Studies: Certificate in Indigenous Governance (business); BA (Indigenous specialization) MAIS (Indigenous specialization): The focus on Indigenous opportunities supports Advanced Education and Technology and Government of Alberta goals as well as AU's mission and mandate.

Business: specializations in project management, entrepreneurship and rural capacity building: Business education is a high priority area in terms of supporting provincial economic expansion and diversity.

Information Systems: M.Sc. and M.Ed. (e-learning); PhD (information systems): AU's mandate is unique in that it focuses on information technology, distance education, e-learning and related disciplines. These programs will extend existing international strengths in these areas.

Humanities and Social Sciences: Certificate in Legal Studies; B.Sc. (mathematics); BPA (human services - Portage College transition); MAIS (literary studies); MA (writing/communication studies); PhD (integrated studies): The provincial cultural policy and Advanced Education and Technology mandates make clear that Alberta needs to continue to develop its cultural mosaic, both for employment and life style purposes, making Alberta a better place to live and work.

Science: M.Sc. (environmental sciences); PhD (environmental sciences): These programs build on many Government of Alberta priorities, including sustainable development, global warming and pollution.

Many of these planned programs are collaborative and will lead directly to improved employment opportunities and skills. Most reach out to under-represented groups, particularly Indigenous Peoples and young men, and all are innovative, creating and supporting remote learning communities, helping more people access post-secondary education and providing needed program options for high needs professions.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

This business plan represents a blueprint to position Athabasca University to fulfill its mandate and maintain the quality of instruction, course materials and services essential to student success. In planning to achieve these goals, and in preparing the 2009-10 budget and the statements of operations and financial position for 2009-10 to 2012-13, a number of complex factors were considered. Key external forces and sources of change include continued (albeit more modest) enrolment growth, rapidly changing technologies and a highly competitive distance education environment.

Growth in undergraduate course registration of five per cent is expected annually over the next four years. While this growth rate is lower than those experienced in the recent past, AU's growth is healthy relative to that of many other post-secondary institutions. Cumulative revenue growth of 38 per cent is planned over the four years, reaching \$168 million in 2012-13. Similar growth in expenditures is planned to respond to this growth and increasing student needs.

A six per cent increase in the Alberta operating grant is anticipated for 2009-10, and three per cent in each of the remaining three years. This level of funding makes it particularly challenging to support operating needs and to ensure that student fees are affordable. An increase in base funding has not been included in the assumptions underlying this plan. Under the Alberta Tuition Fee Policy, the maximum permissible tuition increase for 2009-10 is 4.1 per cent. Based on this limitation, the maximum tuition fee increase is proposed to support ongoing expenditures and major investments.

In 2009-10, initiatives to diversify and ensure sustainable revenues are expanding, and \$1.9 million in donations and endowments and \$1.2 million in matching funds from the Renaissance Fund (Access to the Future Fund) are anticipated. These initiatives are integral to the plan to raise \$22.4 million in endowments and restricted donations over the life of this Business Plan.

As always, salary expenditures continue to be a key budget driver, constituting 67 per cent of all university expenditures. While substantial permanent staffing increases have supported enrolment growth in recent years, minimal staffing increases are planned and possible in the foreseeable future, despite continued growth and increasing student service needs.

The availability of financial and physical resources is crucial to AU's institutional development. Capital investments for facilities and information technology development continue to be desperately needed. Over the next four years, \$95 million in capital investments are planned, for which \$82 million in external funding is being sought. Planned investments include \$70 million in buildings, \$21 million in technology development and \$2 million in land.

Over the four years of this plan, net assets (reserves) generated from previous year surpluses will be invested in new program development (two new doctoral programs) and in information technology development, depleting both reserve accounts. As a result of insufficient funding, operating revenues are not expected to cover expenditures, and shortfalls, over and above planned investments from reserves, are expected in the last three years of this plan. Securing appropriate and equitable funding levels is therefore the university's top priority.

As explained above, AU has received insufficient funding to cover indirect costs related to significant enrolment growth over the past decade. While the approved budget allows the university to continue basic programs and services, it urgently requires an operating lift of at least \$15 million to fund the services critical to fulfilling its mandate. This lift would support curriculum redevelopment and student enrichment.

Statement of Operations

For the year ended March 31
(thousands of dollars)

	APPROVED BUDGET 2008-2009	APPROVED BUDGET 2009-2010	Plan* 2010-2011	Plan* 2011-2012	Plan* 2012-2013
Revenues					
Operating grants	\$ 37,486	\$ 42,310	\$ 57,974	\$ 59,930	\$ 62,276
Undergraduate student fees	42,149	42,978	46,652	49,913	53,174
Graduate student fees	16,824	17,871	20,086	22,155	23,733
Sales of goods and services	13,730	13,248	14,319	15,195	16,238
Research and other grants	1,004	1,390	1,446	867	872
Amortization of DCC	1,007	840	1,197	1,924	2,724
Investment Income	2,275	1,631	1,478	1,328	1,328
Donations	3,500	1,690	4,500	7,500	7,500
Other	679	100	100	100	100
	118,654	122,058	147,752	158,913	167,946
Expenses **					
Salaries and benefits	\$ 81,370	\$ 83,210	\$ 100,198	\$ 106,415	\$ 113,019
Fees and purchased services	19,112	19,047	25,447	28,828	30,517
Materials and supplies	10,742	10,272	11,826	12,448	13,154
Communications and travel	7,052	7,119	7,225	6,890	6,975
Amortization	3,842	2,552	2,963	3,702	4,168
Facilities costs	2,409	2,333	2,754	2,152	2,131
Scholarships	580	494	509	523	534
	125,107	125,027	150,922	160,958	170,498
Excess of expense over revenue	\$ (6,453)	\$ (2,969)	\$ (3,170)	\$ (2,045)	\$ (2,552)
Funding source for Excess					
Excess of expense over revenue	\$ (6,453)	\$ (2,969)	\$ (3,170)	\$ (2,045)	\$ (2,552)
Planned transfers from reserves	6,453	2,969	1,732	-	-
Net Excess (Shortfall)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (1,438)	\$ (2,045)	\$ (2,552)

* Revenue and expenditures in these years are preliminary and will be refined in future year budgets. Assumes a \$15 million base operating grant lift in 2010-11.

** Includes expenditures related to planned investments from restricted reserves.

Statement of Financial Position

As of March 31

(thousands of dollars)

	APPROVED BUDGET 2008-2009	APPROVED BUDGET 2009-2010	Plan* 2010-2011	Plan* 2011-2012	Plan* 2012-2013
Assets					
Current					
Cash and short-term investments	\$ 22,990	\$ 21,310	\$ 20,989	\$ 20,154	\$ 18,915
Accounts receivable	5,091	3,941	4,322	4,667	4,980
Inventory of course materials	3,524	3,988	4,187	4,396	4,612
Prepaid expenses	861	1,352	1,379	1,406	1,434
	32,465	30,590	30,876	30,624	29,942
Non-current investments	38,640	23,505	15,873	16,285	16,622
Capital assets and collections	57,429	46,779	56,412	78,360	100,501
	\$ 128,534	\$ 100,874	\$ 103,161	\$ 125,269	\$ 147,065
Liabilities and Net Assets					
Current					
Accounts payable and accruals	\$ 3,514	\$ 4,671	\$ 5,692	\$ 6,061	\$ 6,358
Salaries and benefits payable	10,494	10,688	12,870	13,668	14,517
Deferred revenue	13,821	14,181	14,890	15,634	16,400
Deferred contributions	21,943	11,788	3,415	3,415	3,415
	49,772	41,327	36,867	38,779	40,690
Deferred salaries and benefits payable	2,151	2,237	2,321	2,414	2,510
Deferred capital contributions	22,568	34,893	46,370	69,445	91,871
	74,491	78,458	85,557	110,638	135,071
Net Assets					
Investment in capital assets	34,861	11,886	10,043	8,915	8,630
Endowments	3,560	2,394	2,594	2,794	2,994
Internally restricted	15,249	8,137	6,405	5,298	3,234
Unrestricted	373	(0)	(1,438)	(2,376)	(2,864)
	54,043	22,417	17,604	14,631	11,994
	\$ 128,534	\$ 100,874	\$ 103,161	\$ 125,269	\$ 147,065

* Revenue and expenditures in these years are preliminary and will be refined in future year budgets.

Statement of Cash Flows

For the year ended March 31

(thousands of dollars)

	APPROVED BUDGET 2008-2009	APPROVED BUDGET 2009-2010
Cash provided from (used in) operating activities		
Excess of expense over revenue	\$ (6,454)	\$ (2,969)
Amortization of capital assets and deferred course development costs	3,842	2,552
Amortization of deferred capital and deferred course development contributions	(1,007)	(840)
Other items not affecting cash	(1,421)	(1,710)
	(5,040)	(2,967)
Change in non-cash working capital		
Change in accounts receivable, inventory of course materials and prepaid expenses	(719)	(331)
Change in current liabilities, except current portion of obligation under capital lease	20,821	(21,995)
	15,062	(25,292)
Cash provided from (used in) investing and financing activities		
Decrease (increase) in non-current investments, net	\$ (1,699)	\$ 20,991
Capital asset and collection acquisitions, net	(24,839)	(24,278)
Endowment awards and contributions, net	2,000	205
Deferred capital contributions	4,443	23,366
Capital contributions for land	8,000	2,000
	(12,095)	22,284
Increase (decrease) in cash and short-term investments	2,967	(3,009)
Cash and short-term investments, beginning of year *	20,023	24,319
Cash and short-term investments, end of year	\$ 22,990	\$ 21,310

* Note: The beginning of year cash and short-term investments amount is projected based on forecasted operating results for the previous year. The 2009-10 amount varies from the approved budget amount for 2008-2009 by the variances for 2007-08 and 2008-09.

CAPITAL PROJECTS

To enhance the student learning experience and respond to projected growth in the next 10 years, Athabasca University plans to make major investments in information and communication technology. One additional major new capital project is planned: consolidation of operations in the Greater Edmonton Area.

As emphasized above, meeting the technological and capital requirements of these projects is a priority. Over the next four years, \$95 million in strategic capital and ICT infrastructure investments are planned, for which \$82 million in external funding is needed. Further, over the next 10 years, \$240 million in capital and ICT infrastructure spending, as outlined in the 10-year expenditure projection, is required. The 10-year capital and ICT projection for 2009-19 is an update of a previous projection, which was submitted to government with the 2006-11 Capital Plan and is adjusted to reflect the required investment in 2009 dollars.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY PROJECTS

ICT projects are as important to AU as facilities projects. As explained above (See pages 38-39), AU believes that the adoption of a revised funding formula which recognizes that technological infrastructure is as integral to the learning environment of distance education students as physical infrastructure is to the learning environment of conventional students is essential. Satisfying the need for increased funding for technological infrastructure maintenance and development continues to be the university's top capital priority.

Capital plans for hardware and systems development associated with the Open Learning Environment total \$87 million over the next 10 years (as per the Capital Plan submitted in 2006). AU has committed \$10 million from its reserves for this project, \$4 million of which was spent in 2007-08 and 2008-09, leaving \$6 million for planned investments. As stated above, \$80 million is needed from government and other sources.

FACILITIES PROJECTS

AU has experienced significant growth in both undergraduate and graduate registration over the past 10 years, but until the last two years, has seen no corresponding increase in capital infrastructure investment for facilities and technology development. Satisfying the need for facilities capital investments remains a pressing problem for AU.

Academic and Research Facility - Athabasca

Construction of AU's 5,343 m² Academic and Research Centre building on the main campus in Athabasca has begun, and occupancy is planned for 2010. When complete, it will provide space and services for the academic, research and educational media development centres of the university. This new facility, being constructed at a total estimated facility capital cost of \$30.7 million (2009 dollars) over two years, will enhance and support increased collaboration and synergies between researchers and academics.

Assuming the estimated completion date of July 1, 2010, is met, the lights on operating grant from Advanced Education and Technology for the first three years of the building's

operations would be \$378,489 for 2010-11, \$519,791 for 2011-12 and \$535,385 for 2012-13, based on the current funding rate of \$91.70 per metre² and adjusted for three per cent inflation per year. Building expenses (utilities) are estimated at \$421,000 for 2010-11, \$585,000 for 2011-12 and \$608,000 for 2012-13.

To support existing and new collections, and in recognition of the significant heritage and cultural life of the Athabasca regional community, AU, in partnership with the Town and County of Athabasca, is seeking additional funds to expand the community/cultural component of the new Academic and Research Centre. The concept is for a significant, appropriately controlled cultural space that would enhance and enrich community social and cultural activities. An additional, \$5-8 million is being sought from the Government of Canada and other sources.

Greater Edmonton Integrated Learning Centre

The Strategic University Plan calls for the development of a Greater Edmonton facility that will accommodate the activities of the Centre for Innovative Management, now located in St. Albert, and the two AU Edmonton centres located in downtown Edmonton. The expected benefits of this project include administrative efficiencies in registration and financial and support processes, including support for those working from home offices in the St. Albert and Edmonton areas.

The St. Albert lease will expire on March 31, 2011, and the downtown Edmonton leases will expire on August 31, 2012. If a new building is not available for occupancy when these leases expire, depending on the market conditions at the time, the university's lease costs could increase substantially.

Approximately 7,400 m² of space will be needed to accommodate existing operations and support projected growth. In 2009-10, expenditures of \$1 million for related functional planning and, potentially, \$2 million for land acquisition in the Greater Edmonton Area are planned. The estimated construction or purchase cost of this facility is an additional \$53 million (2009 dollars).

To proceed, external funding for the full cost of land acquisition and construction or purchase of a building is required, whether through government grants or other external sources. However, being cognizant of the demands on the provincial government's post-secondary education budget, AU is actively seeking a development partner in the Greater Edmonton Area. A lease-to-own opportunity would spread the costs of the proposed new building over a longer period. The university is also considering, subject to government approval, the option of borrowing to fund the acquisition. In this case, AU expects that the savings in lease costs currently funded by the university would cover the costs of borrowing.

Archives Expansion

The university's Capital Plan identifies the need for an archival storage facility, built to Canadian Conservation Institute standards, to house existing and future archival material. Such a structure is also needed to obtain a cultural designation under the federal Cultural Property Import and Export Act. Planning for this building, the estimated capital cost of which is \$10.5 million, will begin in 2011-12 supported by \$200,000 from the Renaissance Fund.

Central Renovation and Teaching Lab: Athabasca

Once the academic centres have moved into the new Academic and Research Centre in 2010, the existing building on the Athabasca campus will require major renovation and addition of a teaching laboratory. The cost of renovations is estimated at \$29.9 million and the work is targeted for 2010-11 through 2015-16. External funding for the related capital costs is anticipated in the capital projections in this Business Plan, as follows:

Phase 1 - Second floor renovation and science laboratory (total \$3.5 million)

- 2010-11 - \$500,000
- 2011-12 - \$1.5 million
- 2012-13 - \$1.5 million

Phase 2 - Major renovation of main campus building (total \$26.4 million)

- 2013-14 - \$3.3 million
- 2014-15 - \$19.8 million
- 2015-16 - \$3.3 million

Planning costs in the amount of \$75,000 are budgeted in 2009-10 for AU Central and lab retrofit planning.

EQUIPMENT PROJECTS

Approximately \$1,050,000 is proposed for fleet vehicle, maintenance and research equipment over the next four years.

LIBRARY AND ART COLLECTIONS

AU continually updates its research collections. In 2009-10, \$100,000 is planned for capital acquisitions for the library and \$25,000 for other collections.

CAPITAL AND ICT INFRASTRUCTURE FORECAST

To reflect AU's plan to meet capital and ICT infrastructure needs, a forecast of projected expenditures as well as funding sources is provided in the following tables:

Capital and Information Technology Infrastructure Expenditure Projections

For the year ended March 31
(thousands of dollars)

	BUDGET 2009-2010	PLAN 2010-2011	PLAN 2011-2012	PLAN 2012-2013	TOTAL
Capital and ICT Infrastructure Expenditures					
Land	\$ 2,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,000
Buildings, leaseholds and site improvements	17,812	9,208	21,530	21,665	70,215
Information technology	3,455	4,955	6,199	6,899	21,508
Equipment	336	295	260	275	1,166
Library and art collections	125	125	125	125	500
	\$ 23,728	\$ 14,583	\$ 28,114	\$ 28,964	\$ 95,389
External Capital Contributions					
Land	\$ 2,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,000
Building	17,777	9,173	21,500	21,650	70,100
Information technology	-	3,500	3,500	3,500	10,500
Equipment	116	-	-	-	116
Expenditures, externally funded	\$ 19,893	\$ 12,673	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,150	\$ 82,716
Internal Capital Contributions					
From amortization	\$ 1,712	\$ 1,766	\$ 1,777	\$ 1,076	\$ 6,331
Other (Reserves)	2,123	144	1,337	2,738	6,342
Expenditures, internally funded	\$ 3,835	\$ 1,910	\$ 3,114	\$ 3,814	\$ 12,673
	\$ 23,728	\$ 14,583	\$ 28,114	\$ 28,964	\$ 95,389

Capital and Information Technology Infrastructure Expenditure Projections

For the year ended March 31

(thousands of dollars)

	BUDGET 2009-2010	PLAN 2010-2011	PLAN 2011-2012	PLAN 2012-2013	TOTAL
Land					
EXTERNALLY FUNDED					
Integrated Learning Centre - Greater Edmonton	\$ 2,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,000
Total Land	\$ 2,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,000
Buildings, leaseholds and site improvements					
EXTERNALLY FUNDED					
Academic and Research Centre	\$ 16,502	\$ 8,373	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 24,875
AU Central Building - Major Renovations 2nd Floor	-	500	1,500	1,500	3,500
Integrated Learning Centre - Greater Edmonton	1,000	-	10,000	19,950	30,950
Self Contained Observatory Building	200	-	-	-	200
Archive Storage Building	-	300	10,000	200	10,500
AU Central and Lab Retrofit Planning	75	-	-	-	75
	\$ 17,777	\$ 9,173	\$ 21,500	\$ 21,650	\$ 70,100
INTERNALLY FUNDED					
Leasehold Improvements - Athabasca	\$ 5	\$ 5	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 10
Leasehold Improvements - Edmonton	20	20	20	5	65
Leasehold Improvements - Calgary	10	10	10	10	40
	\$ 35	\$ 35	\$ 30	\$ 15	\$ 115
Total buildings, leaseholds and site improvements	\$ 17,812	\$ 9,208	\$ 21,530	\$ 21,665	\$ 70,215
Information Technology - major projects					
EXTERNALLY FUNDED					
Computing systems	\$ -	\$ 242	\$ 760	\$ -	\$ 1,002
Learning and research systems	-	3,258	2,740	3,500	9,498
	-	3,500	3,500	3,500	10,500
INTERNALLY FUNDED					
Hardware and software	\$ 127	\$ 92	\$ 54	\$ 81	\$ 354
Governance Systems	115	30	-	-	145
Computing systems	737	567	1,025	660	2,989
Administrative systems	996	766	1,620	2,430	5,812
Learning and research systems	1,480	-	-	228	1,708
	3,455	1,455	2,699	3,399	11,008
Total hardware and software	\$ 3,455	\$ 4,955	\$ 6,199	\$ 6,899	\$ 21,508
Equipment					
EXTERNALLY FUNDED					
Research equipment	116	-	-	-	116
	\$ 116	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 116
INTERNALLY FUNDED					
Vehicles	\$ 30	\$ 40	\$ 40	\$ 40	\$ 150
Research equipment	190	255	220	235	900
	\$ 220	\$ 295	\$ 260	\$ 275	\$ 1,050
Total equipment	\$ 336	\$ 295	\$ 260	\$ 275	\$ 1,166
Library and art collections					
Library	\$ 100	\$ 75	\$ 75	\$ 75	\$ 325
Art	25	50	50	50	175
Total library and art collections	\$ 125	\$ 125	\$ 125	\$ 125	\$ 500
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 23,728	\$ 14,583	\$ 28,114	\$ 28,964	\$ 95,389

TEN-YEAR CAPITAL PLAN

The following table illustrates AU's infrastructure needs until 2018-19, a 10-year planning horizon.

Capital and Information Technology Infrastructure Expenditure Projections: 10-Year Horizon

For the Year Ended March 31 (millions of dollars)

Project	Fiscal Year (cash flow in millions 2009 \$)										Totals
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	
Category 1: Preservation											
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PROJECTS											
Open Learning Environment - Planning	0.06			0.09			0.20				\$ 0.35
Collaborations and Contracts System	0.62	0.42	1.08	1.08	1.10	0.40	0.30				\$ 5.00
Governance Systems	0.12	0.03									\$ 0.15
Student Information Systems Upgrade - Phase 1	0.41	2.03	1.92	1.96	0.60						\$ 6.92
Student Information Systems Upgrade - Phase 2								2.00	3.50	3.50	\$ 9.00
Learning Management System - Phase 1	0.74	1.05	0.58	0.96	1.25	0.70	0.50				\$ 5.78
Learning Management System - Phase 2					0.30	1.90	3.30	2.90			\$ 8.40
Smart Identification and Encryption System	0.56	0.30	0.35	0.18	0.25	0.20					\$ 1.83
Content Management System - Phase 1	0.27	0.18	0.24	0.72	1.80	2.30	1.00				\$ 6.51
Content Management System - Phase 2								2.50	2.50	2.50	\$ 7.50
Articulations and Advising System	0.38	0.35	0.54	0.90	2.50	0.30					\$ 4.96
Identity Management, Disaster Recovery and Security	0.18	0.51	1.44	0.48	4.40	2.60	2.00	2.65	0.25		\$ 14.51
Academics System				0.45	2.25	2.50	2.50				\$ 7.70
Learning Systems Innovations						1.50	2.20	2.50	2.50		\$ 8.70
Hardware and Software	0.13	0.09	0.05	0.08	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09	\$ 0.89
FACILITY AND OTHER PROJECTS											
Observatory Building	0.20	-	-	-							\$ 0.20
AU Central - Lab and Building Retrofit Planning	0.08	-	-	-							\$ 0.08
Leasehold Improvements	0.04	0.04	0.03	0.02							\$ 0.12
Equipment Renewal	0.34	0.30	0.26	0.28							\$ 1.17
AU Central Building - 2nd Floor and Science Laboratory	-	0.50	1.50	1.50							\$ 3.50
Main Campus Building - Major Renovations					3.30	19.80	3.30				\$ 26.40
Capital Planning - Future Facilities Projects					1.49	1.49	1.49	1.49	1.49	1.49	\$ 8.91
Trails and Landscape Enhancements						0.83	0.83				\$ 1.65
Infrastructure Renewal					0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	\$ 2.97
Other	0.03	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	\$ 0.48
Category 2: Expansion and/or Replacement											
Library Collections	0.10	0.08	0.08	0.08							\$ 0.33
Category 3: New Facilities of Major Economic Benefit to the Province											
Land - Integrated Learning Centre - Greater Edmonton	2.00	-	-	-							\$ 2.00
Academic & Research Centre (ARC)	16.50	8.37	-	-							\$ 24.88
Integrated Learning Centre - Greater Edmonton	1.00	-	10.00	19.95	20.00						\$ 50.95
Archive Storage Building	-	0.30	10.00	0.20							\$ 10.50
AU at Calgary Urban Campus											\$ -
Athabasca River Basin Research Centre					0.83	6.60	0.83				\$ 8.25
Conference Centre						0.83	8.25	1.65			\$ 10.73
Category 4: Capital Planning for Major Projects											
Capital Planning for Future Projects											\$ -
Annual Capital Requirements	23.728	14.583	28.114	28.964	40.695	42.570	27.320	16.320	10.870	8.120	241.284

TUITION PROJECTIONS

Athabasca University's tuition fee projections for 2009-10 to 2012-13 are as follows:

	2008-2009 Actual	2009-2010 BUDGET	2010-2011 Plan*	2011-2012 Plan*	2012-2013 Plan*
Course-Based Fees					
Undergraduate Student Fees					
Course fee (3-credit)	\$ 440	\$ 458	\$ 472	\$ 484	\$ 494
Percentage change	4.5%	4.1%	3.1%	2.5%	2.1%
Graduate Student Fees					
Master of Distance Education					
Course fee	\$ 1,350	\$ 1,400	\$ 1,450	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,550
Percentage change	3.8%	3.7%	3.6%	3.4%	3.3%
Master of Health Studies and Master of Nursing					
Course fee	\$ 1,080	\$ 1,130	\$ 1,166	\$ 1,196	\$ 1,222
Percentage change	5.4%	4.6%	3.2%	2.6%	2.2%
Master of Arts—Integrated Studies					
Course fee	\$ 1,205	\$ 1,326	\$ 1,460	\$ 1,610	\$ 1,775
Percentage change	4.8%	10.0%	10.1%	10.3%	10.2%
Master of Science—Information Systems					
Course fee	\$ 1,375	\$ 1,400	\$ 1,425	\$ 1,450	\$ 1,475
Percentage change	1.9%	1.8%	1.8%	1.8%	1.7%
Graduate Diploma Heritage Resources Management					
Course fee	\$ 1,205	\$ 1,326	\$ 1,460	\$ 1,610	\$ 1,775
Percentage change		10.0%	10.1%	10.3%	10.2%
Graduate Diploma in Legislative Drafting					
Course fee	\$ 1,300	\$ 1,365	\$ 1,460	\$ 1,610	\$ 1,775
Percentage change		5.0%	7.0%	10.3%	10.2%
Program-Based Fees					
Graduate Student Fees					
Master of Business Administration					
Program tuition	\$ 42,000	\$ 43,500	\$ 45,000	\$ 45,000	\$ 45,000
Percentage change	0.0%	3.6%	3.4%	0.0%	0.0%
Doctor of Business Administration					
Program tuition	\$ 49,925	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 54,900	\$ 54,900
Percentage change		0.2%	0.0%	9.8%	0.0%
Doctor of Education in Distance Education					
Program tuition	\$ 41,080	\$ 41,830	\$ 42,580	\$ 43,330	\$ 44,080
Percentage change		1.8%	1.8%	1.8%	1.7%
Master of Counselling					
Program tuition	\$ 20,080	\$ 20,894	\$ 21,312	\$ 21,738	\$ 22,151
Percentage change		4.1%	2.0%	2.0%	1.9%

*The fee changes are preliminary and will be refined in future year budgets.

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