

# eCampusAlberta

## eZine - March/April 2007



### What's New!

#### Ministry of Advanced Education and Technology awards \$1 million to eCampusAlberta

The recent \$1 million grant from the Ministry of Advanced Education and Technology will enable eCampusAlberta to take action in several new areas.

The funding will be applied in the following ways:

- ② \$500,000 was received for core initiatives, including strategic plan implementation, accountability and enrollment tracking, increasing awareness of programs, and a quality standards review of all eCampusAlberta courses.
- ② \$300,000 was received to enable improvements and system solutions in the area of learner support.
- ② \$200,000 for technical solutions, including automation of student data extractions, development of resources to support migration of learning management systems (LMS), and a system review of open source LMS.



#### Changes in business model benefit lead and partner institutions

A new business model for eCampusAlberta is designed to address lead and partner institutions' concerns about tuition and FLE splitting that often requires time consuming administrative work. Under the new arrangement, lead institutions will retain 100% of the FLE credit and will no longer split tuition with partner institutions.

“Our primary goal at eCampusAlberta is to increase access to high quality online learning opportunities across Alberta. As part of our strategic planning process, the original business model for eCampusAlberta participation was reviewed. The decision to revise the business model was informed by stakeholder input and a desire to increase the number courses and programs offered through eCampusAlberta,” says Tricia Donovan, Executive Director, eCampusAlberta.

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eCampusAlberta proposed a change to the existing business model at recent meetings of the senior academic officers and board of directors (college and technical institute presidents). The proposed revision was subsequently brought forward for a vote by the Management Committee. The revised change received unanimous support and becomes effective immediately in order to ease administrative responsibilities for the 2006/07 fiscal year.

Effective immediately, the business model for eCampusAlberta is as follows:

- ② The lead institution retains 100% of the FLE in lead and partner relationships.
- ② There will no longer be a tuition split between lead and partner institutions.
- ② The flat fee of \$35 per registration for eCampusAlberta will be maintained until sustainable funding can be secured.

It's also important to note that lead and partner information must still be tracked and reported to the ministry.

eCampusAlberta will work to improve the tracking of lead and partner relationships and seek recognition of eCampusAlberta participation through the Performance Envelope for collaboration.



## Faculty development funding update

Alberta Advanced Education (AAE) has provided eCampusAlberta with \$250,000 in funding for the creation of professional development resources. The new funding will enable system-wide support for faculty and support staff involved in the development, design and delivery of online asynchronous, synchronous, and blended or hybrid learning opportunities.

eCampusAlberta is inviting consortium members to submit proposals that will support this initiative. Proposals may fall under one or more of the following areas:

1. Design and development of new resources
2. Modification and refinement of existing resources

The purpose of this funding is to develop resources that will promote capacity building by enhancing the knowledge and abilities of people involved in online course design, development, and delivery for eCampusAlberta. Although titled the Faculty Development Fund, it is not restricted to faculty. It is expected that people representing various areas of expertise and experience in curricula development and online facilitation will be involved.

All resources developed through this funding will be shared with all consortium members through a central online repository that will be included on the eCampusAlberta web site. Thus, all resources must be designed for asynchronous and/or synchronous delivery or on-demand learning. Licensing and copyright issues should be considered prior to submitting proposals for activities or resources.

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## Faculty development fund schedule

April 25	Call for proposals
September 7	Deadline for application
September 13	Panel review
September 21	Funding awards announcement

For more information on the Faculty Development Fund and to receive application forms, please contact Joanna Budd at [joanna.budd@ecampusalberta.ca](mailto:joanna.budd@ecampusalberta.ca).



## Online tool enables instantaneous course feedback

The Free Assessment Summary Tool (FAST), is a free web-based survey tool designed to provide instructors with course assessments without limitations. Assessments are designed by faculty and can be administered throughout the delivery of a course. Like other surveys, respondents remain anonymous.

FAST was co-developed by Bruce Ravelli of Mount Royal College. Ravelli was looking for a tool that would enable him to receive feedback from his students throughout his course so that he could address any challenges that students were facing. Traditionally, assessments are provided by students at the end of a course when instructors no longer have the opportunity to address issues or challenges that students may have experienced during the course.

FAST is available to anyone who wishes to use it. To view this valuable faculty resource visit <http://www.getfast.ca>.

Watch for a new faculty development space on our website, where you can learn more about FAST and how it can support your online instructional experience.



## Student Testimonials

Online learning has proven to be advantageous for Hope Martin of Outlook, Saskatchewan. Taking advantage of online courses offered through eCampusAlberta meant Martin didn't have to uproot her family and move to Red Deer to obtain her Virtual Assistant certificate.

"The instructors were a great wealth of knowledge, wisdom, and experience who helped me train to become a great virtual assistant," says Hope.

"The flexibility of the program helped me and my family prepare for the challenges, rewards and benefits of building my virtual assistant business."

Hope obtained her Virtual Assistant certificate in June of 2005 (one of the first five graduates) and is currently operating a successful business from her home office.

To learn more about the Virtual Assistant program visit the Virtual Assistant webpage at [http://www.rdc.ab.ca/programs\\_and\\_courses/certificate\\_and\\_diploma\\_programs/virtual\\_assistant\\_certificate.html](http://www.rdc.ab.ca/programs_and_courses/certificate_and_diploma_programs/virtual_assistant_certificate.html).

**“ The instructors were a great wealth of knowledge, wisdom, and experience who helped me train to become a great virtual assistant. ”**

**Hope Martin,  
graduate  
Virtual Assistant program  
eCampus-Red Deer Student**

# Featured Course!

## Human Anatomy (PHED 261) Medicine Hat College, Division of Health Studies - Physical Education

This online course in human anatomy uses photos, video, Flash animation and a series of DVDs to recreate the classroom experience as closely as possible, says instructor Sue Higgins.

A challenge faced in the delivery of online human anatomy courses has always been the requirement for students to be able to identify anatomical structures, which has, until now, necessitated course delivery in a face-to-face environment.

But by using digital photography techniques and Blackboard content delivery software that enables students to see demonstrations online, Medicine Hat College has developed a strong delivery alternative for this academic subject that enables students to complete the course from remote locations.

“This is very much a visual subject area and we had a number of students who are located at a distance and need this course. We set about trying to think about how we could make it more visual and as close to what we have on campus as possible,” Higgins says.

While many of the course’s resources, which Higgins says took approximately a year and a half to develop, are available online in Blackboard, students also complete a lab for each section that is sent to them on DVD. The DVDs enable students to view content that is too big to access from the website, Higgins says.

The course was offered online for the first time in the winter semester and two students completed it. It’s offered as part of Medicine Hat College’s University Transfer/Kinesiology and Physical Education programs but may be applied in many academic areas of study, including massage therapy.

It will be offered online again this fall.

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**Sue Higgins,  
instructor  
Division of Health Studies -  
Physical Education**

# In the News!

## eCampusAlberta featured nationally in the SAIT National Report – Transforming Lives

eCampusAlberta was recently featured in SAIT's National Report – Transforming Lives. This 16-page, colour magazine was distributed in select areas of Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary and Edmonton as well as northern centres, including Fort McMurray. The publication was included in the Globe and Mail, Calgary Herald, Edmonton Journal and Fort McMurray Today. The report's target audience is business and government leaders, SAIT current and prospective business partners, as well as supporters, donors and prospective students.

To view the SAIT National Report visit:

<http://www.sait.ab.ca/pages/about/publications/pdf/SAITNationalReport.pdf>.



### Tool Box

The eCampusAlberta course catalogue offers a course outline feature that enables institutions to upload course outline documents or upload external links to course outlines so that students can access them on member institutions' websites. We encourage member institutions to post this information to help online students make informed choices.

If you have a project or article you would like to see featured in the eCampusAlberta eZine, please contact the eCampusAlberta Administrative Office at (403) 284 - 8777 or e-mail us at [info@ecampusalberta.ca](mailto:info@ecampusalberta.ca)