

Building a stronger Alberta

September 5, 2007

Thousands of Alberta students decide to stay home this fall

Record number to call their house their classroom

Edmonton... A record number of post-secondary students won't be driving to school or catching the bus this fall. Their classroom will be their home as they log on in record numbers to online studies.

"This year there are more courses and more programs offered online in Alberta than ever before," said Doug Horner, Minister of Advanced Education and Technology. "That's due to the foresight of 15 publicly funded colleges and technical institutes who have banded together under the eCampusAlberta partnership."

The eCampusAlberta partnership was established in 2002. Tricia Donovan, Executive Director of eCampus Alberta, said course registrations reached a record of nearly 5,200 in 2006/07 - up approximately 45 per cent from the previous year. The number of online courses has also increased by nearly 40 per cent over last year, to more than 400. As well, the number of credentials offered fully online continues to increase each year and now includes more than 30 certificates, diplomas and applied degrees.

"The future of online education in Alberta looks brighter than ever," said Donovan. "Clearly, there is a demand for online courses and programs in this province." She said online education empowers people to pursue their studies and career ambitions while enabling them to remain living in their own communities.

Increasing flexibility and access to post-secondary learning opportunities is one of the key actions under Premier Ed Stelmach's plan to build a stronger Alberta. Other priorities for the government are to govern with integrity and transparency, manage growth pressures, improve Albertans' quality of life and provide safe and secure communities. To learn more about eCampusAlberta log on to www.ecampusalberta.ca

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NOTE to editors: Backgrounder attached

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eCampus Alberta

eCampusAlberta is a consortium of 15 Alberta colleges and technical institutes, which was established in 2002 to facilitate greater access to high quality online learning opportunities. The organization enables students from across the province to choose from more than 30 provincially accredited online certificate, diploma and applied degree programs and 400 courses offered by 15 Alberta colleges and technical institutes. eCampusAlberta has a mandate to extend the reach of Alberta's post-secondary education system across the province. The Alberta government has endorsed online education delivery as a critical new component of Alberta's post-secondary system and supports eCampusAlberta in its work with partner institutions to advance this objective.

Lead and partner model

Courses are delivered based on a lead and partner model. The lead institution develops and offers the course or program and provides the instruction and materials in an online environment. The partner institution offers support services, such as access to the library and exam supervision as well as research and study skills support. The advantage of this model is that it enables students to take courses offered by institutions located far from their home but access the services offered by an institution that is close to where they live. Participation in online education has increased steadily since the partnership was formed in 2002. The number of registrations in eCampusAlberta courses rose by approximately 45 per cent in 2006/07 to nearly 5,200. This compares with 3,541 registrations in 2005/06.

Member institutions

eCampusAlberta's current membership includes: Bow Valley College (Calgary), Grand Prairie Regional College, Grant MacEwan College (Edmonton), Keyano College (Fort McMurray), Lakeland College (Lloydminster, Strathcona County, Vermillion), Lethbridge College, Medicine Hat College, Mount Royal College (Calgary), NAIT (Edmonton), NorQuest College (Edmonton), Northern Lakes College (Slave Lake and Grouard), Olds College, Portage College (Lac La Biche), Red Deer College and SAIT Polytechnic (Calgary).

For more information, please visit www.ecampusalberta.ca

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