

University of Alberta Quality Assurance Suite of Activities Administrative Unit Review:**University of Alberta - International (UAI) Excerpted Reports**

Executive Summary

University of Alberta International (UAI) is a well-established, comprehensive division that leads, promotes, and supports the U of A's international agenda. Since 2004, UAI has grown in size, staff, and scope, supported by a clear mandate to develop a strong central unit to lead and expand the university's global engagement initiatives. Since then, UAI has continued to evolve in an effort to meet the changing international education landscape and to leverage opportunities to increase international enrolment, expand global engagement, and seek new sources of revenues.

UAI was reviewed by an invited panel of external and internal experts as part of the University of Alberta's Quality Assurance processes. The Quality Assurance (QA) process, originally based on the cyclical review of academic programs under the requirements of the Campus Alberta Quality Council, has been extended to administrative units as well, and UAI is the first such unit to undergo a QA review.

The members of the Review Committee received a detailed self-study prepared by the leadership of UAI. The Committee conducted a site visit where they met with 13 groups including senior administrators, staff, students, faculty members, government officials, representatives from other Alberta post-secondary institutions, and UAI partners. The Committee wrote a final quality assessment report with several recommendations to inform future strategy in the areas of strengthened communications between UAI and the Faculties, and improved opportunities for international education for U of A students, both domestic and international. Leadership at UAI provided a written response to that report that included several commitments to align with the recommendations from the Review Committee, as per the summary below.

Review Dates	July 26-28, 2017
Reviewers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee Chair, David H. Farrar, former Provost and Vice-President Academic, University of British Columbia • Ernst Rank, Director Institute of Advanced Studies- TUM-IAS, Chair for Computation in Engineering, Technische Universität München • David Jeu, Assistant Vice Chancellor, University of California, Berkeley • Jeffrey Riedinger, Vice Provost Global Affairs, Office of Global Affairs, University of Washington • Ahmad Ezzeddine, Associate Vice President for Educational Outreach & International Programs, Senior Associate to the President for Strategic Planning & Special Initiatives, Wayne State University • Guangzhi Xia, Vice Dean, Graduate School at Shenzhen, Tsinghua University • Heather Zwicker, Vice-Provost & Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies & Research, University of Alberta • Larry Kostiuk, Associate Vice-President (Research), University of Alberta

Review Committee Findings and Recommendations

Outcome

The Review Committee was impressed by UAlberta's international activities and accomplishments. They commented that UAI has an outstanding breadth of initiatives and has been strategic in capitalizing on new opportunities in internationalization. They recognized that the international strategic plan currently being developed will clarify which aspects of the UA's international activities belong in UAI. The committee also believed that a new strategic plan was an opportune moment to establish a renewed mandate for UAI. Specifically, they commented that UAI's role and accountability with respect to activities that have impact on the Faculties need to be clarified and take into account the need for Faculties to set academic priorities and be consulted on resource decisions.

In response, UAI expressed gratitude for the report's recognition of the comprehensive suite of services provided by UAI in support of the University of Alberta's international goals, and added that they are committed to turning the report recommendations into plans for improvement with clear goals and timelines.

Unit Strengths

The Review Committee made numerous commendations, as follows:

1. UAI is a well-developed, sophisticated, and successful international student recruitment operation, which has exceeded the stated goal of an international student population of 15% and put the U of A among top achievers for international student enrolments in Canada.
2. International students give positive feedback about UAI's services particularly the quality, knowledge of the staff, and the care and support provided.
3. There is a clear plan for internationalizing the student experience and expanding study abroad opportunities.
4. A logical case exists for the UA's global engagement including partnerships, global research projects, faculty collaborations, and learning opportunities for students.
5. UAI has an excellent reputation and standing as a leading global unit in North America and has contributed to strengthening the overall institutional reputation of UAlberta.
6. Faculty members who met with the review team, in general, reported satisfaction with the services provided by UAI.
7. UAI has high quality revenue-generating programs.
8. The UAI staff are impressive and of high caliber.
9. UAI is highly respected by peer institutions as an example of best practice and as a leader in the field.

Opportunities for Unit Improvement and Enhancement

The Review Committee made several recommendations grouped in 2 main themes:

1. **Improve strategic alignment and communication between UAI and the other internal stakeholders**
 - a. The strategic planning process to renew/establish international priorities and develop operational models for internal and external engagement should be inclusive and address:
 - i. Strengths, weakness and opportunities for UAI programs;
 - ii. The regions of the world that will be the focus of UAI activities;
 - iii. Institutional international enrolment goals;
 - iv. Research priorities for UAI's focus;
 - v. Templates for service level agreements to manage campus partnerships; and
 - vi. Key performance indicators for UAI.
 - b. Recruitment activities should be aligned across the institution to eliminate overlap and duplication of effort, as well as to improve the consistency of

- communications and standards for potential students.
- i. An international student enrolment management plan should be developed in collaboration with appropriate stakeholders, particularly the Registrar's Office.
 - ii. Diversification of source countries for recruitment should be considered. The current focus on China should be expanded.
 - iii. Student recruitment and enrollment efforts should be strategically aligned with international research and education priorities. International alumni should be engaged in identifying and recruiting highly qualified international students.
- c. More effective partnerships with other university units to offer English language training and university-readiness programs should be contemplated.
 - d. Faculties should be engaged to discuss areas of focus for international partnerships which build on areas of strength and identify partners with similar strengths. Current international initiatives should be reviewed for their applicability to U of A's goals and identified areas of strategic focus.

2. Enhance UAI's Organizational Model, Programs and Activities

- a. Criteria should be developed to prioritize the allocation of institutional resources in support of priority international research and educational themes, countries, and partner universities. These criteria should be developed in close consultation with Faculties and should include a mix of retrospective and prospective elements.
- b. An appropriate mechanism to consult with Faculties on new international initiatives and projects undertaken by UAI should be developed to ensure alignment.
- c. Data collection and analysis should be used to monitor the effectiveness and impact of UAI programs, and to communicate their outcomes.
- d. UAI's operational framework to be developed to support the new strategic plan should include mechanisms to ensure collaboration on goals and targets; for example, collaboration with the VP Research Office and Office of Advancement to facilitate support for international joint research collaborations.
- e. Metrics should be identified to assess outcomes/impact investments in international programs and activities. These should be used in an annual review and assessment of all programs, including revenue-generating programs.

- f. The e3 programs should be enhanced:
 - i. By the addition of opportunities for students to participate in faculty research projects and in community service.
 - ii. Through extension to locations where a strategic partner university (with which multiple U of A faculty have research collaborations) is found and, ideally, with connections to strategic industry partners.
 - iii. By offering on-campus e3 programs for exchange students from strategic partner universities.
- g. Past investments and future investments in CLIC should be assessed through evaluation of impact on the number and/or diversity of U of A students studying in China.
- h. Past investments and future investments in GALD should be assessed through evaluation of the program's impact on U of A's research, educational collaborations in China, and quality of applicants to U of A's graduate programs. Positive assessments might warrant an expansion of GALD partner countries beyond China.
- i. The budget model for UAI, including the role for revenue-generating programs and the appropriate balance of base budget support with external revenue, should be clarified.

UAI Response to Recommendations - Implementation Plan

Recommendation 1: Improve strategic alignment and communication between UAI and the other internal stakeholders

UAI commits to do the following:

1. Continue development and consultation on a University of Alberta wide international strategy document to guide the university-wide planning and implementation of international initiatives and programs - Completion by June 30th, 2018
2. Participate in the International Ecosystem that is designed to ensure collaborative, coordinated direction and implementation of international activities at the University of Alberta; the ecosystem consists of the already existing *President's Committee on International Strategy (PCIS)* that directs and evaluates the implementation of the international strategy and the already designed but not yet convened *Provost's Committee on International Initiatives (PCII)* that will provide more specific direction on international activities and programming and will ensure institution-wide alignment and coordination of international activities. Together with the Office of the Provost and Vice-President Academic, establish PCII by June 2018.

3. Collaborate with these committees and establish task force committees to develop and implement specific initiatives. UAI proposes to develop the following five task forces by September/October 2018:
 - a. Provost's Task Force on International Research Collaboration and International Priority Partnerships (PTF-IRC)
 - b. Provost's Task Force on International Recruitment and Global Talent Attraction (PTF-IR)
 - c. Provost's Task Force on International Students' Success (PTF-ISS)
 - d. Provost's Task Force on International Learning and Education Abroad (PTF-IL)
 - e. Provost's Task Force on International Development and Capacity Building (PTF-ID)
4. Collaborate with Advancement to explore a joint position and plan for International Advancement (ongoing)
5. Collaborate with the UA Alumni Association to develop a joint plan for integrated international alumni strategy (select countries only; ongoing)

Recommendation 2: Enhance UAI's organizational structure, programs and activities**UAI commits to do the following:****Organizational Structure**

1. UAI to develop new approaches to systematic data collection and management with the help of the newly developed data management position; focus on better and more coherent use of data on UAI programs for evaluation of effectiveness and efficiency of UAI programs. Where appropriate collaborate with other units (e.g. Institutional Analysis) to ensure integration of data with institutional level data.
2. UAI to undertake further reorganization, especially with a view to enhancing role of regional managers as ongoing cross cutting units that can ensure better internal and external coordination.
 - a. UAI to run a series of strategy planning meetings with participation of all UAI staff in first half of 2018.
 - b. UAI to improve communication within UAlberta by doing the following:
 - i. Review communication tools and improve their effectiveness, e.g. expanded range of electronic newsletters, enhanced web-presence, and more regular brown bag lunches
 - ii. Expand the practice of focus group meetings with specific interests groups on campus with a view to reviewing, revising or expanding UAI programming
 - iii. Strengthen the service dimension in all of UAI's programs, especially in international recruitment and international development and capacity building work

- iv. UAI to regularly publish an annual report with first such report to be submitted by Fall 2018 to PCII.
- v. UAI to regularly submit annual budget outline and planning document to PCII by October 2018.

International Student Recruitment

1. UAI in collaboration with all internal stakeholders, especially the Faculties and RO, to submit an integrated institution-wide international recruitment plan that is based on an understanding of international recruitment as an integral part of the international agenda, integrated with enrollment management and connects with international priorities for research collaboration and education abroad priorities by July 31, 2018.
2. UAI and Alumni Affairs to submit a joint plan for alumni engagement for international recruitment by Fall 2018.
3. Collaborate with the Dean of Students and other internal stakeholders (Faculties, FGSR, Alumni Relations) to lead development of institution-wide strategy for international student success with special attention to be paid to international students' expectations and ambitions with regard to their future careers and their ability to find appropriate work in Canada and abroad.
4. UAI, in consultation with Faculties, RO and other internal stakeholders, to submit an institution-wide plan for a pathway program, possibly in collaboration with other Edmonton based PSIs, to PCII by November 30, 2018. In this context, prioritize strategies to identify sub-groups of international students who show weaknesses in their command of the English language and propose appropriate remediation.
5. UAI in collaboration with Registrar's Office to establish a regular feedback loop from analysis of student success data to international recruitment strategy development as led by UAI and in collaboration with FGSR to identify strategies for recruiting top graduate students. To be delivered by June 30, 2018.
6. The Provost's Task Force on International Recruitment to set clear targets for the diversification of international students in terms of their source countries for the period of 2019 – 2021 and UAI to deliver a corresponding updated diversification strategy by Fall 2018.
7. UAI to submit a strategy on short term programs for international students at UAlberta to PCII by August 31, 2018.

Education Abroad

1. UAI to lead consultations with Faculties and other relevant stakeholders in the university to understand scope for growth of education abroad programming, based on these consultations propose target numbers for education abroad to PCII by June 30, 2018.
2. UAI in collaboration with relevant internal stakeholders (eg Faculties, RO) to submit plan for enhanced mechanisms for assessing and awarding academic credit for education abroad to APC by September 30, 2018.
3. UAI to evaluate impact of existing e3 programs by December 31, 2018.
4. UAI will expand opportunities for UAlberta students to go abroad for co-ops, internships or research internships in a variety of ways, some of which are already showing good impact (in 2016-17, 82 students participated in internships facilitated by UAI, the majority of these placements are research placements). Beyond the e3 programs, we see a variety of new channels to be built that can create growth of such opportunities which seem to be particularly attractive to many of our students, especially in the context of some of our priority partnerships abroad.