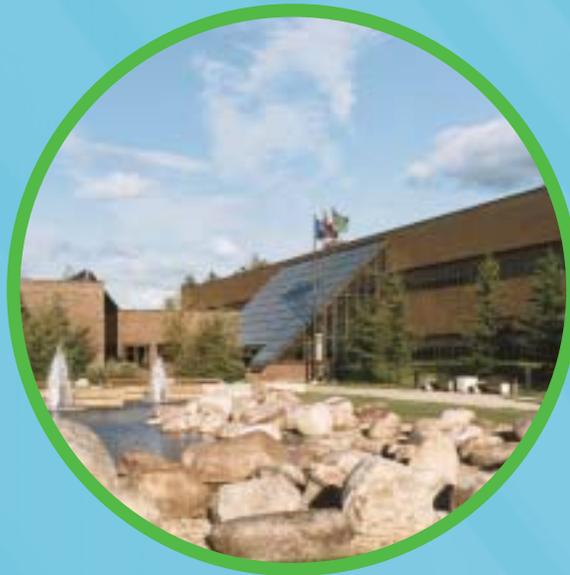


# 2003 – 2007

## Athabasca University Business Plan

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Approved by  
Athabasca University Governing Council  
March 2003



Athabasca University   
Canada's  Open University®

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**ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY  
2003–2007 BUSINESS PLAN**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Athabasca University is Canada's largest and fastest growing distance education university. It has 26,000 students, all of whom are completing their courses and credentials at a distance. Athabasca University offers more than 550 individualized- and grouped-study courses, many bachelor and master degree programs, and a number of University certificate and diploma programs, all via online learning or other method of distance delivery.

Athabasca University is one of the three recipients, and the only North American winner, of the Award of Excellence for Institutional Achievement presented by the Commonwealth of Learning (COL). The COL's Excellence in Distance Education Awards were conferred August 1, 2002 in Durban, South Africa at the Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning.

This Business Plan, which is directed by the *Strategic University Plan*, highlights a four-year, strategic direction for Athabasca University.

### **Accessibility**

Undergraduate and graduate registrations will increase by ten percent (10%) annually, and the number of students and graduates from under-represented groups will also increase. In order to gain the economies of scale that justify Athabasca University's broad curriculum, the University will continue to expand its pan-Canadian student base, with a particular emphasis on Alberta where, by 2007, student numbers will have increased from 11,100 to 15,600.

Undergraduate growth will primarily result from increased enrolments in the existing curriculum. New graduate programs will be introduced at the Masters level, and by 2006, at least one doctoral program will have been approved.

### **Quality**

Athabasca University will continue to distinguish itself from other post-secondary providers of distance and online learning by the quality of the programs, courses, and student support services it provides.

Maintaining our high level of graduate satisfaction and excellent student services standards will necessitate an increased investment in our human resources, staff training, and technological infrastructure, and the acceleration of the University's transition to a digital, e-learning environment.

### **Research**

Athabasca University will expand its reputation in disciplinary and mission-critical (open, distance, and online learning) research, thereby ensuring its curricula and programs are informed by scholarly research and enhancing the University's reputation as research institute.

### **Affordability and Resourcing**

Tuition fees will remain the mainstay of the University's financial resources and annual increases will be based on the University's relative positioning in its two key markets—Alberta and the rest of Canada.

Increasingly, Athabasca University will diversify its funding sources, seeking more support from the corporate sector and from other areas of the Government of Alberta as well as Alberta Learning.

These resources will allow the University to meet its strategic educational goals, to operate with a balanced budget, and to increase its reserves such that they will represent 15 percent of the University's annual budget by 2006.

### **Positioning**

Establishing the Athabasca University name and brand provincially, nationally, and internationally will be the key to enhancing the University's academic, distance education, and e-learning reputation. The creation of an External Relations division will promote both private and public sector recognition.

During the term of this plan, particular attention will be paid, first to gaining US accreditation, and then to positioning the University as a quality provider of online, distance education courses and programs in the US market.

### **Challenges**

In the pursuit of these goals, Athabasca University must respond to the following major challenges:

- attracting and managing significant enrolment growth while ensuring that the exceptional quality of its programs, courses, and student support services continues to define the University;
- working with government to develop strategies to support the technology infrastructure necessary for distant and on-line learning environments;
- expanding and diversifying funding sources in order to support ever-increasing staffing, program, and technological costs; and
- recruiting and retaining excellent academic, professional, and support staff in an implemented, fully networked organizational environment.

## **INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT**

This business plan, which is directed by the *Strategic University Plan*, highlights a four-year strategic direction for Athabasca University.

### ***Our Mission***

Athabasca University, Canada's Open University, is dedicated to the removal of barriers that restrict access to, and success in, university-level studies 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.

### ***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, coordination of credit and credit transfer, and 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.

*The above mandate was approved by the Minister of Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development in April 1999.*

## ***Our Values***

*We value excellence*  
*We value learning*  
*We value scholarly research*  
*We value the free exchange of ideas*  
*We value openness and flexibility*  
*We value diversity and inclusiveness*  
*We value our employees*  
*We value accountability*

The students, faculty, and staff of Athabasca University hold a set of complementary values that we believe are fundamental to our identity and functioning. It is from our varying perspectives that we come together as members of the University community to collectively affirm and enact the following set of values:

### *We value excellence.*

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

### *We value learning.*

Student learning and satisfaction are the 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.

## GOALS AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES

### *Strategic University Plan*

Athabasca University's *Strategic University Plan 2002–2006* sets the direction for the University over the next four years and beyond. The University plans to grow registrations at ten percent per year. While enhancing the quality of its students' experiences through maintaining and improving student services and course quality, the University will make e-learning its focus. The University will enhance and grow its research infrastructure and produce quality research output, building its reputation provincially, nationally, and internationally.

The strategic themes identified in the *Strategic University Plan* are as follows:

- Affordable, flexible, quality education

The University's programs and courses will be competitively priced, and at the undergraduate level, will allow students to begin courses monthly in a self-paced mode. Individualized study will represent an increasing percentage of total undergraduate registrations, with grouped-study options viewed as a complementary, not primary, delivery mode.

The University will hire recognized experts to author course materials, and use best-practice processes and highly qualified staff to ensure quality in all aspects of presentation and learner support.

Athabasca University will accommodate the demand for its courses by increasing undergraduate course registrations by ten percent per annum, maintaining an effective recruitment strategy, and increasing the number of University courses that each student takes. Courses, programs, and supporting services will be delivered using appropriate digital technologies.

The University will grow its graduate course registrations by ten percent per annum by increasing registrations in its current programs and by increasing the number of graduate programs offered.

Athabasca University will continue to improve planning processes throughout the University to ensure that resources are wisely used, and that new resources and those resulting from improved productivity are allocated to the most appropriate courses and programs.

- Accessibility and removing barriers to participation

The removal of barriers of place and time are fundamental to Athabasca University's culture and success. Where other barriers produce disadvantages to particular groups of students, Athabasca University is dedicated to taking practical measures to mitigate such barriers.

Access to post-secondary education is a principle emphasized by the Government of Alberta and shared passionately by Athabasca University. The University will increase the participation rate of Albertans in its courses and programs by implementing targeted

recruitment initiatives. The recruitment potential of collaborations will be advanced through Campus Alberta initiatives.

Athabasca University provides students in the post-secondary system with access to the courses they need to fulfill the requirements of their home institutions. The University also provides a pathway to degree completion for students who wish to make Athabasca University their alma mater. To provide access and remove barriers requires a large, continuing investment and a commitment to technology that will enable students to easily access ever-improving and expanding online curricula and quality services at a distance.

□ Organization and people

Athabasca University is dedicated to providing an efficient working environment with skilled and motivated staff who are able and equipped to work from a variety of places in a networked environment. The networked environment will be fully defined during the 2003–2004 fiscal year. Academic staff will work on a networked basis from their homes and from University locations in Athabasca, Calgary, and Edmonton. The working environment will, in many ways, replicate the situation faced by Athabasca University students who use online facilities to study, communicate, and network. A comprehensive program for staff learning will ensure all staff have the opportunity to develop and refine the skills necessary to work in this environment.

In 2000–2001 and 2001–2002, the Government of Alberta provided the post-secondary sector with directed grants aimed at the attraction and retention of academic and professional staff. This funding has helped Athabasca University attract excellent new staff and retain others through the creation of initiatives to provide research grants to new staff, to offer incentives to move to Athabasca, and generally, to improve the overall work environment.

In addition, the University has spent approximately \$15 million on technology improvement and integration since 1997, and it requires an annual technology commitment in excess of \$2 million to maintain its reputation as a leader in online education.

□ Building identity

Athabasca University must protect and enhance its reputation in various ways including building its research capabilities and becoming a recognized leader in e-learning research. To this end, initial steps have included the appointment of an Associate Vice-President, Research and an expanded research office, both of which have achieved significant success in attracting research funding from external sources. The University supports academics in their disciplinary research by providing time, facilities, and support for grant applications. The provision of infrastructure and seed funding for research will require the University to allocate significant funding to areas that directly benefit faculty members and enhance their ability to advance Alberta's leading role in e-learning innovation.

The University has created a division of External Relations, under a Vice-President, External Relations, to improve fundraising, programs for student recruitment, communication, and branding at the provincial, national, and international levels. Significant development is expected in collaborations and partnerships in the public and private sectors.

Athabasca University has been awarded candidate status toward US accreditation with the Middle States Accreditation Association. The University expects to achieve US accreditation in 2004–2005.

Athabasca University's growth engine continues to be the increase in its individualized-study, undergraduate course registrations and, increasingly, in its graduate program registrations as well. As government operating grants have not kept pace with student population growth, tuition revenue, including tuition in programs not subject to the Tuition Fee Policy, has grown to constitute 55 percent of total revenue. Diversification of funding sources has become important to the fiscal balance of the institution. The formation of the External Relations division marks a significant effort to develop funding sources from corporate partnerships and alumni.

The *Strategic University Plan* directs Athabasca University to build its reserves to a target of 15 percent of its annual revenue by 2006 to ensure that the University can commit reserves to guarantee the financial stability of the University and to take advantage of new investment opportunities.

Finally, the University has embarked on a program of risk reduction through the enhancement of its internal controls, security practices, and accountability. A *Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery Plan* is being implemented in 2003–2004.

### ***Key Opportunities and Challenges***

Athabasca University is exceptionally well placed to capitalize on the expanding distance education market and to continue to grow at an extraordinary rate. The University's registrations are forecast to increase, on average, by ten percent across all programs in each of the next four years, which will produce a cumulative increase in the order of 46 percent.

Enrolment patterns remain strong, with the University intending to grow its registrations at a rate of ten percent per year during the plan period. Since 1996, full-time-equivalent registrations have jumped to 4,573 from 2,237, an increase of 104 percent, and the student population has grown to 24,136 from 12,003, an increase of 101 percent. Graduate registrations have increased to 13.5 percent from 6.6 percent of total registrations. Graduates increased 80 percent to 1,206 in 2002 from 668 in 1998, with the number of graduate credentials awarded reaching 311 in 2002 from 41 in 1996. The number of graduate degrees increased to six in 2002 from two in 1996.

For a dedicated distance education institution such as Athabasca University, remaining competitive means continuing to grow significantly without sacrificing the quality currently associated with its name.

At the provincial level, the University will strengthen its focus on individualized distance learning and the public's awareness of Athabasca University. It will also expand its communication with high-school leavers, offering an alternative or complementary route to university degree completion. Athabasca University will also increase its role in Campus Alberta by expanding collaborative programs with the college sector and by providing spaces

for students from other universities to take courses not available on their own campuses or at the times the students wish to take them. New degree ventures under Campus Alberta, such as the Masters in Counselling, a joint venture with the Universities of Calgary and Lethbridge, may provide a model for future collaborations.

On the national stage, Athabasca University will continue to attract students to its courses and programs in individualized study. Continuation of the articulation and inter-institutional agreements already negotiated across Canada, as well as the development of new agreements, will spur growth through increased recognition and referrals. Nationally, the Canadian Virtual University alliance, spearheaded by Athabasca University, will provide opportunities for continued growth as both become more widely known and students take advantage of the online opportunities offered by Athabasca University and its partners in the Canadian Virtual University.

Internationally, Athabasca University has been granted candidate status toward US accreditation with the Middle States Accreditation Association and expects to obtain US accreditation in 2004–2005. Once accreditation is achieved, activities in the US are expected to increase as few institutions comparable to Athabasca University operate there. This will greatly increase the University's ability to attract US and international students. Some collaborative agreements have already been entered into with US-based institutions to provide selective access to courses for students, and international registrations are expected to increase through more strategic alliances with public and private providers. The significantly higher fees paid by international students, coupled with the fact that Athabasca University can serve the US at a cost structure similar to its servicing of Canadian students, mean that the US market, post-accreditation, should contribute positively to the University's financial position and, by extension, to the Province of Alberta.

In addition to the registration growth in existing courses and programs, the University will seek to expand its curricula by offering more programs and courses to identifiable student groups to meet the needs of students and, thus, the needs of employers and communities. To this end, the *Education Plan* outlines expected expansion in the following areas: Master of Nursing, Master of Education in Special Education, and Master of Science in Information Systems (Computers and Management Information Systems stream).

By 2006, the University also expects to have at least one doctoral program.

The opportunity for extraordinary growth brings with it the following challenges:

- ❑ managing the systemic and human requirements associated with dramatic growth, including the continual growth in, and renewal of, technology infrastructure and the recruitment and retention of faculty and staff at all levels;
- ❑ securing funding for and making cost-effective investments in the technological infrastructure required to support Athabasca University programs, students, and staff to maximize opportunities and potential;
- ❑ investing in appropriate technology for effective learning;

- ❑ securing a more prominent and cost-effective presence in greater Edmonton;
- ❑ focusing on research that will inform Athabasca University and the wider post-secondary system with regard to best practices in open, distance, and e-learning; and
- ❑ expanding Athabasca University's international reputation for distance learning to include international recognition for e-learning research and practice.

Faced with increasing competition, Athabasca University will continue to develop its strategic positioning by ensuring that it remains a competitive provider of quality, individualized, open-learning opportunities. The University's strategic advantage will be maintained by building on its learner-centred philosophy and drive to quality by:

- ❑ ensuring that the University's curriculum and delivery systems remain high in quality and relevant to the needs of learners;
- ❑ reaffirming a commitment to strong arts and science programs as well as relevant applied programs;
- ❑ examining innovative ways to address the needs of learners to allow for significant growth;
- ❑ expanding e-learning resources through the development of e-courses and national and regional leadership in the development of repositories of learning objects;
- ❑ gaining recognition as a world leader in applied research in online, open, and distance education;
- ❑ maintaining Athabasca University's position as a low-cost, high-quality education provider;
- ❑ adapting, and further developing, a strong service culture; and
- ❑ maintaining an institutional culture that values employees and their contributions.

### ***Serving Albertans***

In 2002, Athabasca University served 11,100 Alberta students, as shown in Appendix D, Figure 4. Forty-five percent of the University's 24,500 students are Albertans. Paralleling the University's growth overall, 15,500 Alberta students are expected in 2007. Athabasca University increasingly provides accessibility and lifelong learning opportunities to many Albertans.

The University has ongoing collaborations with many institutions throughout the province, and a number of collaborative grouped-study activities are offered on-site at these institutions. As well, course delivery agreements have been established with other organizations including hospitals, high schools, and police services. In each of these instances, the tuition fees

charged to the students are the same as those charged to students served by individualized distance education technologies, and as such, are also governed by the Tuition Fee Policy.

At Grande Prairie Regional College, a formal collaboration is in place for the delivery of the Bachelor of Commerce and Bachelor of Science in Computing and Information Systems programs. At Lethbridge Community College, business and professional arts programs are available. At Lethbridge Community College, an Athabasca University staff member is on-site to provide assistance to both the students and the College regarding the collaborative programs. At Grant MacEwan Community College, students can pursue Athabasca University professional arts programs via on-site delivery.

Athabasca University has significantly expanded its Bachelor of Nursing program in collaboration with Mount Royal College. In addition, the University offers the Master of Counselling program in collaboration with the Universities of Calgary and Lethbridge.

In 2003–2004, Athabasca University intends to complete a comprehensive review of its articulation of diplomas to ensure that all applicable programs offered by Alberta's colleges and institutes are transferable to relevant degree programs.

Collaborations and articulations with other universities, colleges, and institutes are strategic to extending the University's reach and providing access to students in Alberta, Canada, the US, and internationally.

In many undergraduate programs, post-diploma routes for college and diploma graduates are now available. Athabasca University has articulated applicable diplomas with colleges in Alberta and Ontario and with many colleges throughout Western Canada. Further, Athabasca University has taken a lead role in forming the Canadian Virtual University with a dozen partners across the country.

Out-of-province students pay a tuition fee supplement that ensures they are served at no expense to Alberta taxpayers, and the economies of scale these students provide allow Athabasca University to reinvest in the University's courses and infrastructure. The fact that out-of-province tuition fee revenue is spent primarily in Alberta means significant economic benefits to both the Town of Athabasca and the Province of Alberta.

A less visible but essential aspect of accessibility at Athabasca University is the extent to which it serves visiting students—those already attending, or preparing to attend, other institutions. Visiting students take courses, which they then apply to their degree programs at their home institutions. Approximately ten percent of the students who graduate from the other three Alberta universities have taken at least one course with Athabasca University. For many students preparing for professional programs such as education, social work, and nursing, Athabasca University provides the most flexible, affordable, and sometimes, the only option for pre-professional preparation.

At different times during the past four years, Athabasca University has proposed to the University of Alberta and the University of Calgary that more formal collaborations be initiated to increase the number of Alberta students taking Athabasca University courses as part of their residential degree programs and to provide them with enhanced services.

Establishing an Athabasca University presence on their campuses, and making registrations in Athabasca University courses more transparent and easier for their students, are ideas that have been proposed by Athabasca University. The University of Calgary is now seriously considering this model. With the assistance of Alberta Learning, this strategy could be an excellent pedagogical and cost-effective means of increasing the capacity of the Alberta post-secondary system, without having to invest in more bricks and boards infrastructure. During the term of this Business Plan, Athabasca University will continue to promote this model and work on achieving similar goals with the other Alberta universities.

### ***Tuition Fees***

The level of tuition that students must pay as a result of lower government contributions and escalating salary costs continues to be of concern to Athabasca University. Given the fiscal environment within which the University operates, the base undergraduate tuition fee was increased by 8.5 percent on September 1, 1999, by a further 8 percent on September 1, 2000, by 4.9 percent on September 1, 2001, and by 4.1 percent on September 1, 2002. Tuition fees will be increased a further 7.3 percent effective September 1, 2003, as outlined in Appendix A.

At present, the University is nearing the policy threshold of 30 percent for tuition fees and can foresee that, in the very near future, growth alone will push the tuition-to-expenditure ratio beyond 30 percent. Athabasca University has experienced, and continues to experience, extraordinary levels of growth and intends to continue to grow its registrations at ten percent per year. The University wants to work with Alberta Learning to ensure that the accessibility goal is not compromised by the Tuition Fee Policy. The University is anticipating that an exception to the tuition policy will be made for distance learning.

### ***Staffing***

With its focus on distance education, Athabasca University requires a substantial core faculty and a significant professional and support staff infrastructure to provide services to students. The largest cost driver at Athabasca University is salary and benefits (65 percent). Further increases to staffing costs will arise once the impact of the Universities Academic Pension Plan underfunding is known. Given the high registration growth and student services expectations, the University faces significant challenges to its ability to negotiate affordable collective agreements with its various employee groups. The level of settlements in other sectors has fueled the expectations of faculty and staff, and thus, it will be extremely challenging to negotiate affordable agreements. This pressure is compounded by the need to recruit and retain staff.

Athabasca University has the special challenge of attracting professional and support staff to a small, rural community where spousal employment opportunities are limited. In particular, the University's unusual dependence on a high percentage of support staff positions, to be filled by individuals who would not generally relocate in order to take up employment, poses a real recruitment challenge.

Given its idiosyncratic nature, the University needs to invest heavily in staff training and intends to use distributed training techniques to train all staff to the skill levels identified as required for the networked environment.

Recognizing its potential vulnerability to sudden resignations or catastrophic events, the University is implementing a comprehensive succession plan for its senior positions. This plan will ensure that well-qualified individuals will be available to step in, should a senior position become vacant through resignation, illness, death, or other unforeseen circumstances.

### ***Research Initiatives***

Having established its Research Centre, the University has been successful in planning, supporting, and funding research activities. An Associate Vice-President, Research was appointed and several major federal grants have been received. The first two of three Canada Research Chairs at Athabasca University have been appointed, and the third nomination is in progress.

Athabasca University is playing a key role in research pertaining to the development of learning object repositories and standard indexing systems. In conjunction with the Netera Alliance and CANARIE, Athabasca University is a lead partner in the *eduSource Canada* research project. This project will spearhead the development of tools, systems, practices, and protocols that will support learning object repositories. This approach to learning will give both educators and learners, at all levels, enormous flexibility in how they obtain and use online learning resources.

Success in research will be evidenced by an improved citation rating of Athabasca University's publications in referred journals, by an increased participation in open and distance learning conferences, and by an increasing profile for the *International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning (IRRODL)*.

### ***Facilities***

In addition to the main campus situated in the Town of Athabasca, the University has a significant presence in each of Calgary, Edmonton, and St. Albert. While the main campus of the University will remain in the Town of Athabasca, it is important that the University's presence and prominence be continued in Calgary and significantly increased in Edmonton. These locations provide opportunities to access the various resources that are needed by the University but are not available in Athabasca.

Athabasca: The "heart" of the University will remain in the Town of Athabasca. In 2001–2002, the University received funding from Alberta Infrastructure to assist in the purchase of an additional building located within the Town. The Course Materials Production department was relocated to the new building, which is named the Tim Byrne Centre in honour of the University's founding president. In 2003–2004, renovations to the space vacated by the Course Materials Production department will be completed to provide additional space for University staff. Combined with the implementation of the networked environment, the campus is expected to accommodate staff growth through 2010, thus allowing the University to add approximately 5,000 full-time equivalent students.

Calgary: At present, the University leases some 1,110 square metres of office space in Calgary. The activities conducted at the Calgary site will be reviewed and restructured. The communications network (data and voice) must also be renewed and enhanced.

Edmonton & St. Albert: When considered together (Edmonton and St. Albert), the University currently leases some 3,400 square metres of office space in the greater Edmonton area. Implementing and enabling a networked environment in which a large number of core academic staff reside in the Edmonton area and work primarily out of their homes, requires more accommodations (e.g., drop-in space, meeting rooms, etc.) at the University's Edmonton location.

Eventually, the Edmonton area facilities will also house some of the technical staff the University requires, but who are not available in the Athabasca area. The data and voice network at the Edmonton area site will be enhanced to provide access to the networked educational world for students and academic staff who are undertaking research and scholarly work. The data and voice network enhancement will also facilitate networking among the Athabasca, Calgary, and Edmonton facilities. The implementation of the provincially sponsored SuperNet will greatly augment the networking capabilities and cost effectiveness of the University.

While the University would like to maintain a storefront presence of approximately 1,200 square meters in downtown Edmonton, it is reviewing the possibility of combining the balance of its Edmonton and St. Albert operations at one location to introduce operational efficiencies and to accommodate a required expansion of approximately 50 percent in the Edmonton area over the next four years. The University plans to work with Alberta Learning and Alberta Infrastructure with a view to obtaining appropriate alternative space in the greater Edmonton area.

### ***Technological Integration and Infrastructure***

Athabasca University's courses and programs are primarily delivered through distance modes that involve online communication and, increasingly, via e-learning courses that utilize the Internet. A large proportion of the University's students are either studying part-time or are visiting students from other universities. This situation allows the post-secondary system to achieve a number of efficiencies. Because classrooms are not required, significant levels of growth can be accommodated without the need for additional physical space, and students do not have to commute to campuses or leave productive jobs to achieve their educational goals.

During the past two years, Athabasca University has greatly expanded its undergraduate e-learning environment to student cohorts in many of its programs. The breadth of online courses has been expanded, and the number of courses with online components is increasing in all University programs. An online examination system has been piloted and will be expanded to serve courses across the University.

The University's shift to more electronic delivery modes is occurring rapidly and several new areas of application have emerged. All courses now contain some form of electronic communication, content, individual and group activities, or assessment, and all student services are accessible online. For most undergraduate programs, non-electronic options are provided to ensure accessibility for those who are not able or equipped to study in this manner.

An *E-learning Plan* has been developed that will guide the University's efforts in e-learning. It is an annual, rolling plan that details strategies for the development of online learning and tracks progress in implementation. The plan anticipates the development of portals that provide students with individually tailored access to Athabasca University courses and services.

At present, the University attempts to "refresh" its computing hardware on a three-year cycle. Table 1 in Appendix B shows that in the four-year period from April 1, 1997, to March 31, 2002, Athabasca University spent \$13.1 million on infrastructure needs and, of this amount, \$8.2 million was used to address technological infrastructure. To date, these needs have been funded by judicious use of University reserves and by utilizing, where permitted, funds from the Learning Enhancement, Research Excellence, Infrastructure Renewal, and Intellectual Infrastructure Partnership envelopes. Athabasca University's allocation of funding from these various envelopes represented less than two percent of the total funds granted, even though its students represent more than seven percent of the university system's students.

Past technological development was funded by a combination of provincial funding and surplus University funds, but provincial innovation funding envelopes have since been reduced or phased out, and the University's reserves are seriously depleted. Although the University intends to dedicate as much funding as it can toward technological infrastructure renewal (both hardware and software systems), it does not have the ability to sustain the level of funding needed. The estimated minimum annual cost of expanding, renewing, and maintaining this infrastructure is over \$2 million.

The successful development and maintenance of e-learning initiatives require that a modern, technological infrastructure be established, maintained, and continually upgraded to support the University's delivery and student support systems. Requirements include increased bandwidth (SuperNet), updated information technology (IT) hardware and software, and internal networking.

The University was pleased to learn that Athabasca is being considered for inclusion in the earlier rather than the later phases of the Alberta SuperNet project, as this will certainly stabilize bandwidth costs. However, the projected arrival of the SuperNet fibre in Athabasca in 2004 is longer than the University can afford to wait. Media reports of contractual disputes regarding the building of the rural portions of the SuperNet are disconcerting and do not assure the University that its needs will be met in the promised timeframe. It is crucial that SuperNet access be provided to the University's Athabasca site soon, because its rural location and fundamental need for bandwidth will exacerbate a capital infrastructure funding imbalance for the University should it be forced to use more expensive alternatives to access bandwidth.

Athabasca University's unique mandate as an open distance education institution means that much of its systems infrastructure must be custom-designed. Traditional campus-based universities can usually find off-the-shelf systems designed for their larger populations. The University's *Systems Development Plan* is being developed to provide a comprehensive blueprint to a well-integrated technological infrastructure that allows the effective utilization of the power of the Internet by providing Web access to essential data for all staff in the networked environment. A process will be formalized for project evaluation and prioritization. From among its priorities, the University urgently needs to replace the student management system that it uses to track student progress through courses.

Mechanisms that allocate funds based primarily on an institution's capital infrastructure, as represented by square footage of building space, do not properly recognize the needs of a unique institution such as Athabasca University, particularly when that institution has experienced significant growth. A new or tailored method that reflects the special needs of the University must be developed. As well, any funding mechanism designed to deal with the technological infrastructure of Athabasca University must be reliable and predictable. If a mechanism is developed, then the manner in which it works must be clear to both the University and Alberta Learning, and assurances are needed that the funds will be provided on an annual basis. Athabasca University believes that its technological infrastructure funding should be driven by a clearly defined mechanism developed specifically to recognize the unique needs of virtual campuses.

## **CAPITAL PROJECTIONS**

The University has developed a facilities *Capital Replacement Plan* that identifies when certain major plant and off-site services should be replaced or upgraded. To partially fund these needs and the needs of the *Systems Development Plan*, annual amortization allocations are used as a proxy for annual available capital funding. Note that this funding formula provides for replacement only, and not for capital expansion for space or technological infrastructure needs.

The expansion funding received from Alberta Infrastructure in 2001–2002, along with an internal allocation of resources, will allow the University to accommodate its projected staff needs on the main campus in Athabasca until 2010. To meet the University's space needs in the Edmonton area, additional capital funding is needed.

The University is mandated to be a leader in the field of open and distance learning and, to fulfill this mandate, it is crucial that the required technological infrastructure be in place. At present, the University is unable to make the necessary investments in the technological infrastructure needed to support e-learning platforms, administrative systems, and distributed networks.

Capital expenditures in the order of at least \$2 million per year are deemed to be necessary, primarily for technology infrastructure, capital equipment, and systems development. As mentioned, the University wants to work with Alberta Infrastructure and Alberta Learning to address these technological infrastructure and space needs.

### ***Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery Plan***

In 2002, the University approved and began implementing a *Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery Plan*. The purchase of capital assets, the addition of network capacity, and the

development of required space are underway and will be completed during 2003–2004 for all services and operations. The plan will be a living document, one that will be continually updated and tested through this business plan period and beyond.

## **FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS**

The approved 2003–2004 budget and projected statements of operations for the years 2004–2005 to 2006–2007 are included in Appendix C. The projections reflect the University's difficulty in presenting balanced budgets in the current environment of provincial fiscal restraint. The assumptions used in developing these projections are as follows:

- ❑ Annual provincial operating grant increases: 2 percent for 2003–2004, 2 percent for each of the following three years, and no additional funds will be available through the Access Fund.
- ❑ Faculty and staff attraction and retention grant increases of 0 percent for current and future years.
- ❑ Infrastructure renewal (facilities) funding for 2003–2004 at \$175,000, for 2004–2005 at \$500,000, and \$1 million thereafter through 2006–2007.
- ❑ Volume growth in undergraduate registrations at 10 percent per year.
- ❑ Tuition fee increases of 7.3 percent in 2003–2004, and 5 percent in years 2004–2005 through 2006–2007.
- ❑ Volume and price growth in graduate tuition fees in accordance with the business plans for these programs.
- ❑ Staff wage settlements of 4.25 percent for faculty and 4 percent for support staff in 2003–2004, and 3 percent annually through the remaining years in the period.
- ❑ Pension contingency factored in at 5 percent starting July 1, 2004.
- ❑ General price inflation of 3 percent throughout the period.

## **CHANGES FROM PREVIOUS BUSINESS PLAN**

The focus of this plan is on significant levels of growth. A major addition is the effort to obtain US accreditation to facilitate entry into US markets and to enhance the transfer of Athabasca University credits to US accredited institutions. The ongoing implementation of the *Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery Plan* is an initiative that will reduce business and organizational risk, and assure Athabasca University suppliers, staff, students, the provincial government, and the public that the University is prepared, to the maximum possible level, to grow and maintain services.

A number of key issues must be re-emphasized: funding support for Athabasca University's technological infrastructure; the expanded regional presence in Edmonton; the emerging pressures resulting from collective bargaining; and the applicability of the Tuition Fee Policy.

Last year's business plan provided several preliminary goals and performance measures related to the development of Athabasca University's *Strategic University Plan*. The University is now moving ahead and developing related integrated operational plans. This year, the performance measures and targets are being refined, however, some specific targets have not yet been established. The *Strategic University Plan* goals and performance targets for 2003–2004 are summarized in Appendix D. The alignment between Athabasca University's and Alberta Learning's goals and strategies is summarized in Appendix E. The University is confident that these goals and strategies continue to be well-aligned.

**APPENDIX A**

**Table 1: Tuition Fee Projections**

**Athabasca University  
Tuition Fee Projections  
For the years 2001–2002 to 2006–2007  
(thousands of dollars)**

	<b>2001–2002 Actual</b>	<b>2002–2003 Budget</b>	<b>2003–2004 Budget</b>	<b>2004–2005 Plan</b>	<b>2005–2006 Plan</b>	<b>2006–07 Plan</b>
<b>ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY:</b>						
Undergraduate student fee						
Course fee, 3-credit	\$ 341	355	381	400	420	441
Percentage change		4.1%	7.3%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%
Amount of increase			\$ 14	26		
Amount allowable per Tuition Fee Cap Policy			\$ 25	27		
<b>COMPARATIVE :</b>						
	<b>1994–1995 Actual</b>	<b>2002–2003 Actual</b>	<b>Cumulative % increase 1994–1995 to 2002–2003 (over 7 years)</b>	<b>Proposed 2003–2004 (rounded)</b>	<b>Proposed % increase 2002–2003 to 2003–2004 (rounded)</b>	
Athabasca University	\$ 255	355	<b>39%</b>	381	7.3%	
University of Alberta	\$ 228	403	<b>77%</b>	443	6.9%	
University of Calgary	\$ 239	412	<b>72%</b>	438	6.3%	
University of Lethbridge	\$ 238	347	<b>46%</b>	406	7.0%	
<b>STUDENT CONSULTATION:</b>						
<p>Athabasca University Executive meets regularly with Athabasca University Students' Union to review the University's proposed and projected tuition fee increases, most recently, in January 2003. Athabasca University Student's Union is also represented on the University's Budget Advisory Committee, Academic Council, the AUGC Finance Committee, and the full AUGC.</p>						

## APPENDIX B

**Table 1: Summary of Infrastructure Expenditures**

<b>Athabasca University</b>							
<b>Summary of Infrastructure Expenditures</b>							
<b>From fiscal year 1997–1998 to 2001–2002</b>							
<i>(thousands of dollars)</i>							
<b><u>Infrastructure</u></b>		<b><u>1997-1998</u></b>	<b><u>1998-1999</u></b>	<b><u>1999-2000</u></b>	<b><u>2000-2001</u></b>	<b><u>2001-2002</u></b>	<b><u>Total</u></b>
Buildings	\$	14	88	586	166	965	<b>1819</b>
Leasehold Imp.		67	36	11	520	44	<b>678</b>
Furnishings		26	17	85	55	125	<b>308</b>
Equipment		187	148	213	1,304	238	<b>2,090</b>
Sub-total		<u>294</u>	<u>289</u>	<u>895</u>	<u>2,045</u>	<u>1,372</u>	<b><u>4,895</u></b>
Software (purchased services)		314	1,261	317	450	1,139	<b>3,481</b>
Hardware		885	710	847	1,258	1,068	<b>4,768</b>
Sub-total		<u>1,199</u>	<u>1,971</u>	<u>1,164</u>	<u>1,708</u>	<u>2,207</u>	<b><u>8,249</u></b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b><u>1,493</u></b>	<b><u>2,260</u></b>	<b><u>2,059</u></b>	<b><u>3,753</u></b>	<b><u>3,579</u></b>	<b><u>13,144</u></b>

## APPENDIX B

***Table 2: Summary of Infrastructure Funding***

**Athabasca University  
Infrastructure Funding through Capital Grants  
From fiscal year 1997 to 2002**  
(thousands of dollars)

	U of A	U of C	U of L	AU
<b>1997–2000</b>				
IRE	\$ 37,718	\$ 16,748	\$ 4,123	\$ 369
Access Fund	11,270	11,460	3,150	-
<b>2000–2001</b>				
IRE	12,191	5,784	1,317	124
Access Fund	680	600	1,100	-
<b>2001–2002</b>				
IRE	46,554	22,276	6,365	547
Access Fund	4,620	2,540	-	-
Expansion	21,000	-	-	3,000
<b>Total IRE 1997 to 2002</b>	96,463	44,808	11,805	1,040
<b>Total Access Fund</b>	16,570	14,600	4,250	-
<b>Total Expansion</b>	21,000	-	-	3,000
<b>Total Capital Grants 1997 to 2002</b>	\$ 134,033	\$ 59,408	\$ 16,055	\$ 4,040
Supported Area (gross sq. meters)	788,112	493,349	132,405	16,000

## APPENDIX C

**Table 1: Statement of Operations**

**Athabasca University  
Statement of Operations  
For the year ended March 31  
(thousands of dollars)**

	ACTUAL	APPROVED	PROPOSED	PLAN	PLAN	PLAN
	2001-2002	BUDGET	BUDGET	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007
		2002-2003	2003-2004			
<b>Revenue</b>						
Province of Alberta grants	\$ 19,335	\$ 21,854	\$ 20,932	\$ 21,178	\$ 22,045	\$ 22,420
Undergraduate student fees	17,303	18,437	21,762	25,391	29,125	33,427
Graduate student fees	9,272	10,734	11,854	13,573	16,150	18,573
Sales of goods and services	5,296	4,747	6,352	7,588	8,678	9,204
Amortization of deferred capital & deferred course development contributions	1,339	1,000	870	819	805	805
Interest	730	528	460	490	520	520
Donations and fundraising	36	-	-	100	200	300
Other	329	215	55	55	55	55
	<u>53,640</u>	<u>57,515</u>	<u>62,285</u>	<u>69,194</u>	<u>77,578</u>	<u>85,304</u>
<b>Expenses</b>						
Salaries and benefits	33,101	35,379	40,120	44,276	49,468	55,351
Fees and purchased services	8,252	8,158	7,363	8,233	9,585	10,576
Materials and supplies	4,891	5,715	6,073	7,017	8,244	8,716
Communications and travel	4,230	3,637	4,056	4,241	4,539	4,641
Amortization of capital assets & deferred course development costs	3,289	3,150	3,059	3,205	3,205	3,385
Facilities rental, insurance, utilities, & taxes	1,230	1,435	1,464	1,505	1,592	1,639
Scholarships	125	10	150	175	180	186
Pension contingency	0	0	0	542	765	810
	<u>55,118</u>	<u>57,484</u>	<u>62,285</u>	<u>69,194</u>	<u>77,578</u>	<u>85,304</u>
Excess of revenue over expenses	<u><b>\$ (1,478)</b></u>	<u><b>\$ 31</b></u>	<u><b>\$ 0</b></u>	<u><b>\$ 0</b></u>	<u><b>\$ 0</b></u>	<u><b>\$ 0</b></u>

## APPENDIX C

**Table 2: Statement of Changes in Cash Flow Budget**

**Athabasca University**  
**Statement of Changes in Cash Flow Budget**  
**For the year ended March 31**  
**(thousands of dollars)**

	ACTUAL <u>2001-2002</u>	BUDGET <u>2002-2003</u>	BUDGET <u>2003-2004</u>
Cash provided from (used in) operating activities:			
Excess of expenses over revenue	\$ (1,478)	\$ 31	\$ 0
Items not affecting cash flow:			
Amortization of capital assets & deferred course development costs	3,289	3,150	3,059
Amortization of deferred capital & deferred course development contributions	<u>(1,339)</u>	<u>(1,000)</u>	<u>(870)</u>
	472	2,181	2,189
Change in non-cash working capital:			
Change in accounts receivable, inventory of course materials, and prepaid expenses	(410)	1,073	(1,013)
Change in current liabilities, except current portion of obligation under capital lease	<u>1,244</u>	<u>(857)</u>	<u>346</u>
	<u>1,306</u>	<u>2,397</u>	<u>1,522</u>
Cash provided from (used in) investing and financing activities:			
Decrease (increase) in non-current investments, net	640	-	(400)
Capital asset and collection acquisitions, net	(4,587)	(5,075)	(2,577)
Deferred course development contributions	(112)	-	65
Deferred capital contributions	3,440	-	-
Capital lease financing	-	-	-
Capital lease payments	(429)	(47)	(47)
Capital contributions	<u>175</u>	<u>1,800</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>(873)</u>	<u>(3,322)</u>	<u>(2,959)</u>
Increase (decrease) in cash and short-term investments	433	(925)	(1,437)
Cash and short-term investments, beginning of year	<u>9,456</u>	<u>8,956</u>	<u>10,485</u>
Cash and short-term investments, end of year	<u>\$ 9,889</u>	<u>\$ 8,031</u>	<u>\$ 9,048</u>

APPENDIX C

***Table 3: Statement of Financial Position Budget***

<b>Athabasca University</b>			
<b>Statement of Financial Position Budget</b>			
<b>As at March 31</b>			
<b>(thousands of dollars)</b>			
	<u>ACTUAL</u>	<u>BUDGET</u>	<u>BUDGET</u>
	2002	2003	2004
<b><u>ASSETS</u></b>			
Current			
Cash and short-term investments	\$ 9,889	\$ 8,031	\$ 9,048
Accounts receivable	2,869	2,700	3,605
Inventory of course materials	3,084	2,800	3,526
Prepaid expenses	357	450	511
	<u>16,199</u>	<u>13,981</u>	<u>16,690</u>
Non-current investments	6,212	6,852	7,000
Deferred course development costs	525	600	260
Capital assets and collection	23,024	24,420	21,008
	<u>\$ 45,960</u>	<u>\$ 45,853</u>	<u>\$ 44,958</u>
<b><u>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</u></b>			
Current liabilities			
Accounts payable and accruals	\$ 1,834	\$ 2,115	\$ 1,751
Salaries and benefits payable	4,455	4,684	5,722
Deferred revenue	7,682	8,400	8,991
Deferred contributions	957	1,200	-
Due to joint venture	398	-	-
Capital lease obligation, current	47	43	47
	<u>15,373</u>	<u>16,442</u>	<u>16,511</u>
Obligations under capital lease	153	110	59
Deferred capital and deferred course development contributions	13,878	14,646	13,092
Deferred capital contributions	1,261	-	-
	<u>30,665</u>	<u>31,198</u>	<u>29,662</u>
Net assets			
Investment in capital assets	9,471	10,221	9,154
Endowments	1,089	1,089	1,089
Internally restricted	4,735	3,138	4,735
Unrestricted	-	207	318
	<u>15,295</u>	<u>14,655</u>	<u>15,296</u>
	<u>\$ 45,960</u>	<u>\$ 45,853</u>	<u>\$ 44,958</u>

**APPENDIX D**

**Athabasca University Strategic Goals and Performance Targets for 2003–2004**

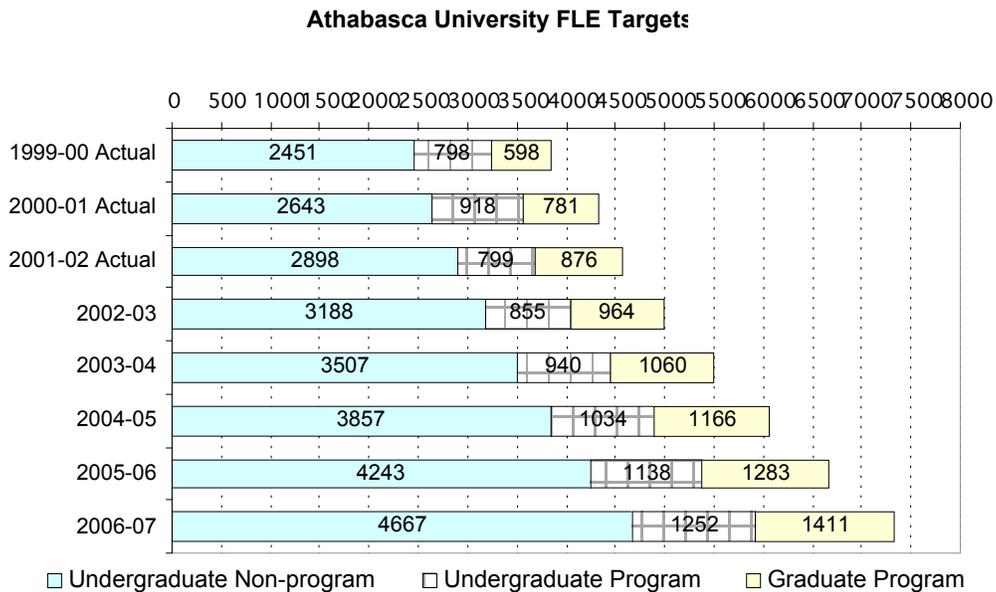
The first goals in the *Strategic University Plan* all revolve around *Meeting Learners’ Needs*. This will be accomplished through open access, flexible learning systems, and quality courses, programs, and student support services.

**OPEN ACCESS**

**GOAL 1:** To provide increased access to our courses and programs

Target: Increase registrations by ten percent per year

Figure 1.



**GOAL 2:** To increase the number and success of students identified with traditionally under-represented groups (women, Aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities, and visible minorities)

Target: To be developed in relation to the Centre for World Indigenous Knowledge and Research and the *Education and Student Services Plans*

**GOAL 3:** To ensure that residency requirements and Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) recognition do not represent unjustifiable barriers to openness

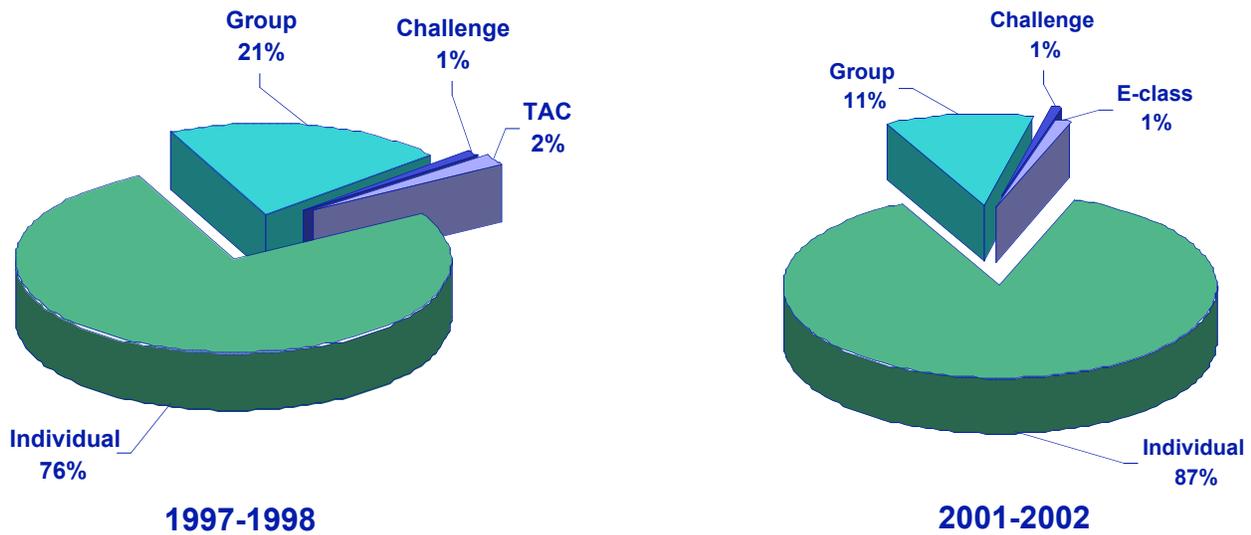
Target: Review to be undertaken during 2003

## FLEXIBLE LEARNING SYSTEMS

GOAL 1: At the undergraduate level, continue to consider individualized distance education as our core operation

Target: 90 percent of undergraduate course registrations will be in individualized study

**Figure 2.  
Registration by Mode of Study**



GOAL 2: At the graduate level, where grouped study represents the primary mode of delivery, enable individualized study where feasible

Target: Review by program areas to be undertaken

GOAL 3: Use appropriate e-learning pedagogy to increase flexibility for students to engage in learning and assessment activities

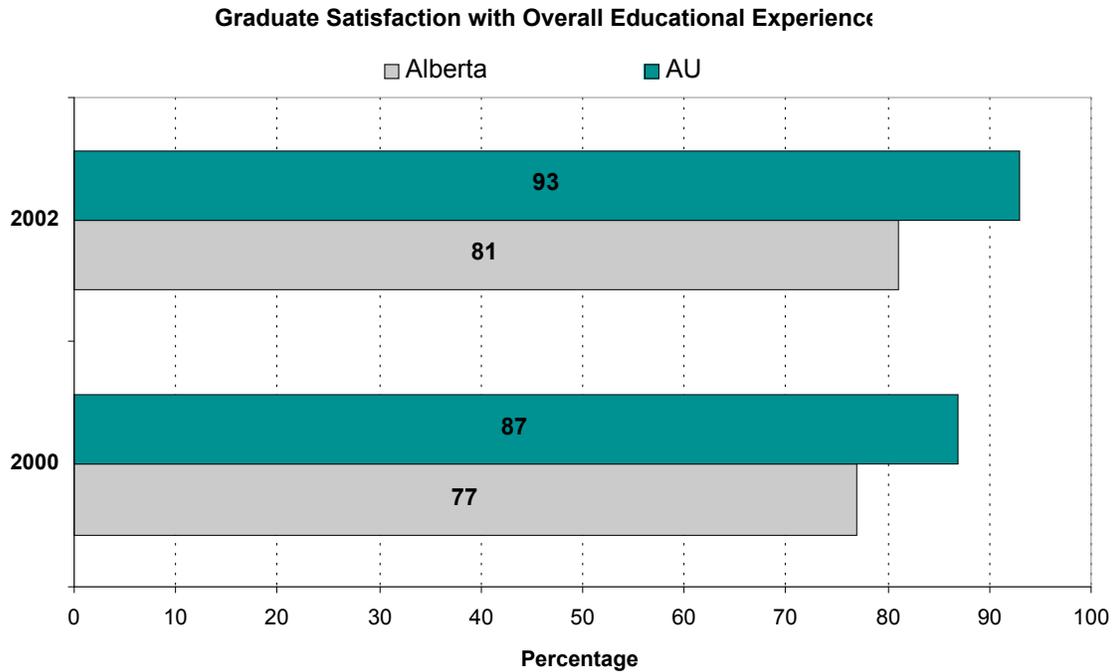
Target: Increase in the proportion of primary and secondary materials available digitally; target to be developed

## QUALITY COURSES, PROGRAMS, AND STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

GOAL 1: To improve the quality of courses, programs, and student support services

Target: Graduate's satisfaction with educational experience exceeds provincial average

Figure 3.



GOAL 2: To increase the number of graduate programs offered

Target: Program proposal to be developed for approval by Alberta Learning by 2005

GOAL 3: To promote a balanced curriculum among applied, professional, and liberal arts and sciences programs

Targets: a) Applied and professional courses will comprise 30 percent of undergraduate course offerings

b) Liberal arts and sciences courses will comprise 25 percent of graduate programs

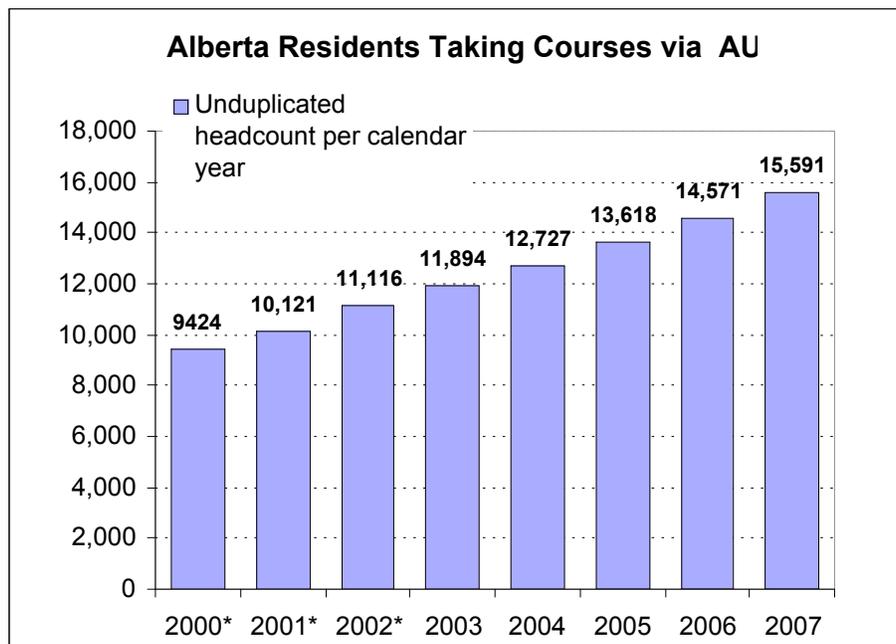
## PROVINCIAL, NATIONAL, AND INTERNATIONAL POSITIONING

GOAL 1: To improve Athabasca University's accomplishments, visibility, and recognition as a key provider of education in Alberta

Targets: a) Increase number of graduates from other Alberta universities with Athabasca University credits; study to be undertaken 2003

b) Number of Alberta students to increase by seven percent per annum

Figure 4.



GOAL 2: To enhance Athabasca University's reputation as "Canada's Open University"

Target: Increase revenue from contracts from federal agencies; target to be developed

GOAL 3: To become recognized as the premier open and distance learning university in North America

Target: Number of externally funded activities that reflect on Athabasca University's reputation; target to be developed

GOAL 4: To further Athabasca University's international reputation as a leading open and distance university

Target: Number of registrations associated with strategic international partnerships; target to be developed

## ORGANIZATION AND PEOPLE

GOAL 1: To implement “the networked environment” at Athabasca University

Target: Under development

GOAL 2: To promote a productive workplace environment

Target: 95 percent of service standards for each unit will be met or exceeded

GOAL 3: To ensure that the structures of academic decision making and internal administration are representative

Target: Review to be undertaken

## FISCAL HEALTH

GOAL 1: To manage growth so that it strengthens the University’s financial position

Target: Increase reserves generated by annual operating budget; target to be developed *(Given current cost pressures, Athabasca University is unable to project any increase in reserves at this time.)*

GOAL 2: To expand the sources of University funding

Targets: a) Increase amount of endowment fund; target to be developed

b) Increase net amount contributed by targeted fundraising

**Table 1: Net Fundraising and Infrastructure Grant Forecasts**

	<u>2003–2004</u>	<u>2004–2005</u>	<u>2005–2006</u>	<u>2006–2007</u>
Net fundraising target	\$ -	\$ 100,000	\$ 200,000	\$ 300,000
Infrastructure funding target	\$ 175,000	\$ 500,000	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 1,000,000

**APPENDIX E**

***Athabasca University's Alignment with Alberta Learning Goals and Strategies***

<b>Alberta Learning</b>		<b>Athabasca University</b>	
<b>Goals and Strategies</b>	<b>2002–2005 Business Plan Strategies</b>	<b>Goals and Strategies</b>	<b>Performance Measures</b>
<i>High quality learning opportunities</i>		Meeting learner needs – Open, flexible, quality courses, programs, and student support	Student satisfaction with educational experience
<i>Responsiveness and flexibility</i>	<i>Meet the needs of learners</i>		Growth in Full Load Equivalents (FLEs)
	<i>1.1.2 (a) Work with Aboriginal communities</i>	Increase number and success of traditionally under-represented groups	Growth in registrations by Aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities, women, visible minorities; target to be developed Course completion rates; target to be developed
	<i>1.1.2 (b) Implement Campus Alberta Framework</i>	Improve Athabasca University's accomplishments, visibility, and recognition as a key provider of education in Alberta	Number of Alberta students Number of Alberta graduates Number of graduates from other Alberta universities with Athabasca University credits
	<i>1.1.3 (b) Increase recognition of credentials of foreign-trained Albertans</i>	Ensure residency requirements and Prior Learning Assessment Recognition do not represent unjustifiable barriers	Undertake a review of residency requirements and Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition processes

<b>Alberta Learning</b>		<b>Athabasca University</b>	
<b>Goals and Strategies</b>	<b>2002–2005 Business Plan Strategies</b>	<b>Goals and Strategies</b>	<b>Performance Measures</b>
	<i>1.2.2 Provide alternate delivery approaches to meet diverse learner needs</i>	Use appropriate e-learning pedagogy to increase flexibility for students	Best practices demonstrated and publications in e-learning pedagogy
<i>Accessibility</i>	<i>Openness</i>		
	<i>1.3.1. (b) Sustain access to quality learning programs in sparsely populated rural communities</i>	Increase access to courses and programs	Growth in course and program registrations
	<i>1.3.2. (e) Work with Infrastructure to initiate post-secondary facilities utilization</i>	Expand the sources of University funding	Proportion of infrastructure grant money awarded to Athabasca University
<i>Affordability</i>			
	<i>1.4 Financial need is not a barrier to learners participating in learning opportunities</i>	Increase number and success of traditionally under-represented groups	Amounts awarded for scholarships and bursaries
	<i>1.4.2 (a) Ensure tuition fees remain affordable</i>		Maintain competitive tuition fees
	<i>1.5 Monitor critical cost pressures</i>	Manage growth so that it strengthens the University's financial position	
	<i>1.5 (b) Working with Innovation and Science, strengthen the research capacity of Alberta's Universities</i>	Enhance Athabasca University's reputation as Canada's Open University	Per faculty member publications, contracts, grants, and awards
		Further Athabasca University's international reputation as a leading open and distance university	Number of externally funded activities that reflect on Athabasca University's international reputation

<b>Alberta Learning</b>		<b>Athabasca University</b>	
<b>Goals and Strategies</b>	<b>2002–2005 Business Plan Strategies</b>	<b>Goals and Strategies</b>	<b>Performance Measures</b>
			Number of registrations generated through strategic partnerships
<i>Excellence in Learner Achievement</i>	<i>2.1 Learners demonstrate high standards</i>	Learner outcomes defined and assessed	
<i>Well Prepared Learners for Lifelong Learning, World of Work, and Citizenship</i>	<i>3.1 Lifelong learning</i>		Percent of graduates indicating educational experience helped them to - work independently - develop independent learning skills
	<i>3.2. Learners are successful in finding and maintaining employment</i>		Graduate employment results
	<i>3.4.2 Create learning opportunities to help Albertans be successful in a global society</i>	Promote balanced curriculum among applied, professional and liberal arts and sciences programs	Distribution of undergraduate course offerings Distribution of graduate program offerings
<i>Effective Working Relationships</i>	<i>4.2.1 (a) Advance priorities for online learning</i>		Publications, contracts, and awards for e-learning research



**Contacting Athabasca University:**

Dial toll-free, 1-800-788-9041, for calls originating in Canada and the US. If you reside in Alberta, please call the Athabasca University office nearest to you:

Athabasca and area: (780) 675-6100

Calgary and area: (403) 263-6465

Edmonton and area: (780) 421-8700

Fax: (780) 675-6437

Web site: [www.athabascau.ca](http://www.athabascau.ca)

Enquiries: [www.askau.ca](http://www.askau.ca)

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