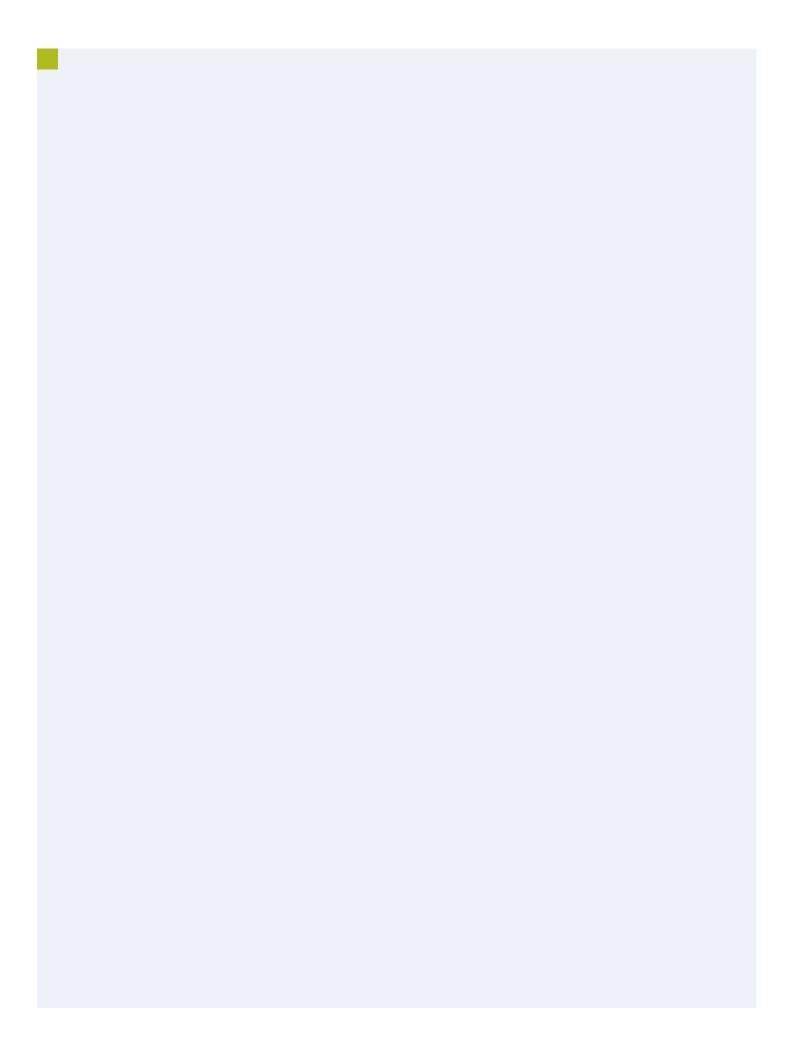
# Athabasca University

# Comprehensive Institutional Plan 2011–14



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# **Accountability Statement**

This Comprehensive Institutional Plan was prepared under the direction of the Athabasca University Governing Council in accordance with legislation and associated ministerial guidelines and in consideration of all policy decisions and material, economic or fiscal implications of which the council is aware.

Original signed by Barry Walker

Barry Walker, FCA Chair, Athabasca University Governing Council

February 25, 2011

# **Executive Summary**

Athabasca University is one of Alberta's four public comprehensive research universities and Canada's largest specialist in university-level online and distance education. As Canada's Open University, AU is dedicated to removing barriers to post-secondary education. AU plans to continue to play a strong role in Campus Alberta and to work collaboratively with other institutions to guarantee Albertans flexibility of choice in post-secondary learning opportunities.

This Comprehensive Institutional Plan has been informed by consultations with a wide variety of stakeholders, including input and feedback from student and alumni groups, faculty and staff members, formal committee and governance bodies, community and private sector partners and government representatives.

Key drivers affecting AU today include the ongoing recession and its implications for university funding, the transition to a knowledge economy and the emergent information and communication technology and e-learning environment. Institutional strengths include AU's international standing in online learning research and practice, its information and communication technology infrastructure and its human resource capacity. However, costs associated with advancing and maintaining that infrastructure, increasing domestic and international competition in online and distance education, and international competition for researchers in key disciplines are related challenges.

The goals, priority initiatives, expected outcomes and performance measures identified in this Comprehensive Institutional Plan are geared to realization of AU's *Strategic University Plan: 2006–11*: enhancing accessibility and open access, ensuring quality in learning, fostering quality research and scholarship, securing and stewarding human and material resources in support of the university's mission and mandate, and building communities. A new strategic plan will be produced over the coming year.

Three new bachelor's degree programs and a post-baccalaureate diploma program will be introduced during the coming year. Additional new programs are under consideration; however, the university's ability to proceed with them is subject to funding availability.

AU's total enrolment is projected to grow by approximately two per cent per year over the course of this plan, to 8,241 full-load equivalents.

AU remains committed to a sustainable budget strategy that aligns available resources with the university's mission and strategic priorities. The goal of the 2011–12 budget is to maintain teaching and research excellence and to ensure student access and program affordability. Student fee increases for the year will be within the limits of the Alberta Tuition Fee Policy.

Projects dedicated to maintaining or developing the educational, technological and student service capacities critical to AU's success, particularly information and communication technology infrastructure projects, are central to the capital plan. Major projects now underway or planned for the immediate future include development of the Open Learning Environment (information and communication technology systems development), completion of the Academic and Research Centre and construction of a new optical auroral observatory.

#### **Institutional Context**

Athabasca University, one of Alberta's four public comprehensive research universities, is Canada's largest specialist in university-level online and distance education. As Canada's Open University, AU is dedicated to removing educational, geographical, financial, social, cultural and other barriers that can limit access to post-secondary education. In doing so, AU guarantees access to university-level study to a broad range of non-traditional students. In addition to its open admission policy, AU further sustains its open university philosophy through comprehensive student support and library services designed for students studying at a distance.

#### Mandate

Founded in 1970 and operating as a comprehensive academic and research institution under the authority of the *Alberta Post-secondary Learning Act*, Athabasca University is a public, board-governed, open and distance education university which serves students throughout Alberta, across Canada and around the world. Working as a partner within Campus Alberta, Athabasca University is committed to collaborating with other key stakeholders to ensure a seamless and responsive advanced education system that provides high-quality learning opportunities in support of lifelong learning.

The university offers a range of courses and programs leading to graduate and undergraduate degrees, certificates and diplomas in the humanities, the social sciences, the sciences, technology, business and the health disciplines.

As an open university, Athabasca University seeks to remove barriers to undergraduate and graduate education. It offers flexible enrolment opportunities for learners, regardless of age, gender, culture, income, disability, career and family obligations, geographic location or educational background. As a distance education university, Athabasca University provides flexibility for lifelong learners who cannot or choose not to undertake residential post-secondary education. The university offers learners the opportunity to interact with students across Canada and around the world through programs in established and emerging areas as it seeks to meet the needs of career professionals, develop research expertise and create knowledge that fosters a global outlook among its graduates.

Athabasca University provides high-quality, interactive learning environments that include a variety of online and other media technologies for individualized and cohort learning. The university's library and tutorial services and extensive student support services that facilitate access and increase learner success are integral aspects of a quality open and distance education system. Similarly, its course designs and technology applications are based on current research in open and distance education, pedagogical advances in lifelong learning and contemporary developments in online learning technologies. The university actively pursues technological innovations that can enhance its teaching, research and administrative functions.

The university provides undergraduate degree completion opportunities for university transfer students and college diploma graduates through credit co-ordination, credit transfer, prior learning assessment and associated forms of learning accreditation. It supports collaborations such as its degree completion agreements with colleges and partnership with Alberta-North. These collaborations, together with its participation in initiatives such as the Canadian Virtual University, reflect Athabasca University's longstanding commitment to adult and lifelong learners, to Aboriginal communities, to learners in remote, rural and northern areas, to under-served urban populations and to program students at other universities who seek courses to accelerate degree completion. The university also acquires and maintains accreditation in other Canadian provinces and in appropriate international jurisdictions.

Athabasca University pursues and demonstrates excellence in research and scholarship, viewing research as central to the creation and mobilization of knowledge, the enhancement of its programs, the education of its students, the betterment of its community and the development of its faculty and future scholars. Besides its international reputation for research in all aspects of open and distance education and learning technologies innovation, the university is developing notable strength in interdisciplinary research in several areas such as Canadian studies, globalization and cultural studies, Indigenous education, space and environmental sciences, project management, and nursing and health management. Aspects of technological change are integral to many of these theme areas. By supporting and conducting research activity in all program areas, Athabasca University makes significant contributions to cultural, scientific and professional development in Alberta and beyond.

Athabasca University's academic, professional and support staff engage in professional service within the education system at local, provincial, national and international levels. The university encourages its members to serve a wide range of communities through activities such as volunteerism, community based research, involvement in local community organizations and participation in virtual learning communities.

Approved by the Minister of Advanced Education and Technology on November 17, 2009

#### **Mission Statement**

Athabasca University, Canada's Open University, is dedicated to the removal of barriers that restrict access to and success in university-level study and to increasing equality of educational opportunity for adult learners worldwide. We are committed to excellence in teaching, research and scholarship and to being of service to the general public.

#### Principles

Adherence to four key principles underlies all of AU's operations:

Excellence: We are dedicated achieving the highest standards in teaching, research, scholarship and

student service.

Openness: We are committed to our mission of guaranteeing access to post-secondary learning to

all who have the ability and desire.

Flexibility: We are committed to providing flexible learning models to meet learners' needs.

Innovation: We continue to adopt and develop learner-centred, technology based learning models.

#### **Values**

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

- We value excellence: The search for excellence is the hallmark of all of our endeavours.
- We value learning: Student learning and satisfaction are measures of our success.
- We value scholarly research: We engage in reflective practice through the scholarship of discovery and the scholarship of teaching.

- We value the free exchange of ideas: A respectful climate for open discourse promotes innovation, discovery and social responsibility.
- We value openness and flexibility: Reducing barriers to education enhances access and social equity.
- We value diversity and inclusiveness: Diversity and inclusiveness enhance the quality both of learning and of the workplace.
- We value our employees: The commitment, innovation, creativity and continuous learning of every employee contribute to our success.
- We value accountability: We are accountable to our students, to each other and to the public.

# Plan Development

This Comprehensive Institutional Plan is informed by consultations with a wide variety of stakeholders over the past year. Input and feedback from student and alumni groups, faculty and staff members, formal committee and governance bodies, community and private sector partners and government representatives have been integral to short- and long-term planning.

#### **Internal Consultations**

Through its formal governance and committee structures, AU consults regularly with its internal stakeholders. In addition, special events have been scheduled to seek input from students and alumni members. Staff input on matters ranging from course and program development to budget planning was encouraged through town hall meetings held in Athabasca, St. Albert, Edmonton, and Calgary.

In 2010, AU made use of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education Self-Study Process, a year-long, institution-wide consultative process, to review its programs and services, governance and support structures, institutional resources and educational outcomes, all in relation to its mission and goals. This process was completed in the fall of 2010, and recommendations have been documented.

Working with Alberta Foresight, AU organized a scenario creation workshop for its governing bodies in November 2010. Workshop findings included forces and factors impacting the value propositions that a great university must provide by 2030. A number of key insights and potential future actions for the university were documented through this workshop.

#### **External Consultations**

Over the past year, AU has consulted with community, business, governmental, Aboriginal and Métis organizations in the Athabasca, Edmonton and Calgary areas and in northern, rural and remote regions of Alberta. Representatives of non-governmental organizations, school districts, the Alberta Teachers Association, the Alberta Distance Learning Centre, Alberta colleges and universities, Alberta Advanced Education and Technology, research organizations (Alberta Innovates, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Canada Foundation for Innovation, the Natural Science and Engineering Research Council), Alberta-North, Arctic colleges, communities and partners in the Learning Communities Project, and Canadian Forces bases were among those included in these meetings.

Other Campus Alberta post-secondary institutions were consulted on a range of matters including prospective shared facility arrangements, academic collaborations and credit transfer, shared research initiatives and potential collaborations on special projects.

#### Strategic Planning

With the *Strategic University Plan: 2006–11* nearing the end of its five-year cycle, the university has entered into a comprehensive community-based strategic planning process. Initiated in January 2011, this process will solicit input from both internal and external stakeholders. A draft report is planned for October 2011.

#### Stakeholders

Over the past year, as a part of its planning and funding initiatives, AU has worked with a wide variety of stakeholders, including federal, provincial and municipal government departments and agencies, nongovernmental organizations, national and international educational and research bodies, public school divisions and public school administrators, private companies, professional associations, community groups, government-funded and private funding agencies and foundations, and individual funders.

## **Environmental Scan**

**Note:** This scan touches only lightly on research, which is fully addressed in the environmental scan included in AU's December 2010 *Institutional Research Plan*, available on the Campus Alberta Planning System website.

#### **Key Drivers**

#### 1. The Recession

The ongoing recession has affected most aspects of the Alberta economy. Like other post-secondary institutions in the province, AU has been challenged to maintain revenue streams and contain expenditures. Challenges range from uncertainty about base grants, a reduction in envelope and capital funding and tuition fee pressures to increased competition in online education, shrinking corporate tuition sponsorship programs and a growing number of working students who cannot afford to invest in part-time education to increase future earnings. At a time when the costs of labour and information and communication technology (a major cost for an online institution) continue to increase, these factors result in decreased resources, adding pressure to an already tight budgetary situation. Members of the university's administration, faculty and staff alike are working hard to sustain the existing learning environment, hoping that positive change in the near future will lessen or prevent severe negative impacts on students.

#### 2. The Growing Knowledge Economy

While Albertans are increasingly aware of the ongoing transition from a product economy to a knowledge economy, the long-term ramifications of this societal change are only beginning to be understood. As Thomas Riley, executive director of the Commonwealth Centre for Electronic Governance, put it, "Technological developments in the twentieth century have transformed the majority of wealth-creating work from physically-based to 'knowledge-based.' The only comparative advantage a company will enjoy will be its process of innovation—combining market and technology know-how with the creative talents of knowledge workers to solve a constant stream of competitive problems—and its ability to derive value from information."

AU is at the centre of this transition as all university processes are being conceptualized anew and digitized. This process is both challenging and empowering, and it has increased awareness of many factors affecting performance such as the shift to knowledge workers, increased spending on intangible assets, increasing job qualifications, Canada's slow information and communication technology adoption rate and degree of online business readiness, and the national underinvestment in information and communication technology (e.g., 60 per cent of the rate of investment in the United States) and the resulting reduced productivity.\*

The most immediate effect on AU of these changes is the move toward ubiquitous digital interconnectivity, working, thinking and learning: "The digital divide used to be conceptualized as . . . an access issue—with groups divided by the access to ICT. It is now understood that the divide has moved. Having access is not enough . . . even after controlling for Internet access, socioeconomic

http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/51/28/45326349.pdf

 $<sup>*\,</sup>http://www.thework foundation.com/assets/docs/publications/$ 

http://de-en.gc.ca/consultation-paper/consultation-paper-6/#c\_0

http://www.weforum.org/pdf/GITR10/GITR%202009-2010\_Full%20Report%20final.pdf

http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/corporate/media\_kit/reports-publications.cfm

status is an important predictor of how the Internet is actually used in daily life."\* In short, people who thought their formal education was over are learning that they have more to do and find themselves in the (often informal) process of learning to use, master and then create with an ever evolving digital toolbox. The Media Awareness Network's 2010 paper "Digital Literacy in Canada" (http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/corporate/media\_kit/reports-publications.cfm) paints a picture of a digital literacy continuum that affects Canadians of all ages as they move from the basic knowledge, skills and awareness needed to join the e-world, through the intermediate stage of digital literacy needed to improve productivity, efficiency and quality to develop the advanced abilities needed to change processes and create digital content. As many Albertans as possible must advance to this final step if the province is to become a truly innovative participant in the world of tomorrow. As Alberta's online university, AU is at the centre of this change, and its research and academic activities represent exciting opportunities to help the province advance.

#### 3. The Emergent ICT and E-learning Environment

The impact of ever-expanding innovations in information and communication technology is an issue related to the growth of the knowledge economy. Such innovations present interesting research subjects for faculty members and provide opportunities for developing new learning services for students, opportunities which bring with them associated infrastructure, product and staffing costs. Online students justifiably expect continued innovation in the development and delivery of their learning experience (in all areas, not just the blended portion of a residential environment), and AU is working hard to meet the challenge of fulfilling these expectations. In a digital age, everything at AU is, and will probably remain, in a state of change as the university constantly

- incorporates changes aimed at improving learning outcomes (as determined by faculty members and professional learning designers)
- evaluates how such changes and their outcomes fit with AU's mission and programs
- balances the need and desire for change against human and technical resource capacities

Addressing the need for innovation in information and communication technology motivated AU to push (successfully) for the only capital-funded information and communication technology infrastructure grant under the Government of Canada's Knowledge Infrastructure Program (The Open Knowledge Environment Project) and the Community Adjustment Fund funded Course Digitization Project. The university will continue to work toward achieving its information and communication technology and digitization goals, and ongoing dialogue with respect to these goals will remain a key element of its relationship with Alberta Advanced Education and Technology.

#### Major Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges

#### Strengths

- International leadership in online learning research and practice
- A virtual world approach to all activities
- · Information and communication technology infrastructure
- Human resource capacity
- Unique mandate to be open and flexible and to help students complete residential programs
- High registration and graduation rates from under-represented communities

<sup>\*</sup> Rhonda Sharpe. Conceptualizing Differences in Learners' Experiences of E-learning: A Review of Contextual Models (York, U.K.: Higher Education Academy, 2010), 10.

#### Weaknesses

- A provincially supported institution operating in a national context: conflicts between funding models and operating realities
- International competition for researchers in key disciplines
- · Lower emphasis on and awareness of need for public funding for part-time students
- Need for continuous updating of information and communication technology infrastructure
- Ability to meet the costs of innovation in a period of low operating funds

#### Opportunities

- Rapidly growing prospects for areas of expertise such as twenty-first century e-learning models, information and communication technology, the knowledge economy and digital connectivity
- Potential for technology transfer and entrepreneurial business models
- Increased need for online business learning partnerships, program laddering, etc.
- · Achieving efficiencies through partnership with like-minded institutions and bodies
- Expanding research impact in all discipline areas

#### Challenges

- · Meeting constantly rising expectations of students and government
- Increased competition in the online learning sector from conventional universities and institutions based in other jurisdictions
- Threats to enrolment and perceptions of quality from for-profit e-learning companies
- Lack of general understanding of the operational and budget considerations affecting online learning institutions

# Impact of Government of Alberta and Advanced Education and Technology Policies and Goals on AU's Comprehensive Institutional Plan and Planning Processes

As part of its regular planning and reporting process, AU consults major government documents such as the Government of Alberta and Advanced Education and Technology business plans, reports and resource documents ranging from the *Campus Alberta Planning Framework* and the *Information and Communication Technology Strategy* to Alberta Innovates publications and Alberta Health priorities. The goal at all times is to determine commonalities between government priorities and AU's mission and mandate, thereby allowing the university to advance shared goals consistent with the overall purpose of Campus Alberta. The development of this Comprehensive Institutional Plan and related plans over the past few months were particularly informed by government documents in the following respects:

• The new *Alberta Competitiveness Act* and the *Government of Alberta Strategic Business Plan:* 2010–13, with their focus on supporting and incubating Alberta business success, have informed AU's plan to become more entrepreneurial, to seek partnerships with business and to increase capacity and productivity through information and communication technology and

e-learning solutions. Another objective which evolved from consideration of these and related Government of Alberta policies and documents was to identify ways to partner with other Alberta institutions to reduce duplication and increase efficiency while advancing learning opportunities for Albertans.

- Advanced Education and Technology core priorities with their focus on fostering a provincial
  culture of learning, increasing post-secondary achievement among the members of historically
  under-represented groups, increasing flexibility and accessibility, and achieving high
  satisfaction levels support and inform much of what is contained in this document and ongoing
  university planning processes.
- AU's research institutes, its growing information and communication technology business
  connections and other initiatives align well with Alberta Education and Technology and
  Alberta Innovates research and development priorities, which focus on commercialization,
  technology transfer, finding ways to partner with business and supporting the development
  of highly qualified personnel and high-tech industries. These initiatives will continue to grow
  and expand.

# Goals, Priority Initiatives, Expected Outcomes and Performance Measures

AU is currently involved in the process of developing a new strategic university plan. In the *Strategic University Plan: 2006–11*, the university identified six strategic priorities, all of which focus the university as a whole and its staff, faculties and institutes on the university's mission to remove barriers to education and ensure student success at university-level study. Progress to date toward achieving these priorities has been reported annually to Alberta Advanced Education and Technology, through the university's annual reports, and to students and other university stakeholders.

#### Access

AU will continue to increase participation rates and ensure that the university is accessible to students from diverse regions and backgrounds. It will strive to maintain its visiting student market and increase the number of program students in its urban and rural markets, particularly in its graduate programs. It will continue to focus on ensuring flexibility of access through improving its information and communication technology infrastructure.

#### Goals

- 1. Recruit and retain and students from diverse regions and backgrounds and provide necessary aid when possible
  - a. Continue to implement the Enrolment Management Plan, specifically to
    - i. enhance prospective learner engagement
    - ii. continue to enhance student engagement with tutors and faculty
    - iii. continue to improve the examination process
  - b. Formulate and implement a student retention strategy
  - c. Strengthen scholarships and bursary programs for undergraduate students
  - d. Improve financial support for graduate students
  - e. Expand international recruitment efforts
  - f. Continue to recruit students from rural and remote communities and from other groups that are under-represented in post-secondary education
  - g. Focus on recruitment in the secondary school system
  - h. Continue with implementation of the Learning Communities Project, Phase 2: Indigenous Communities
- 2. Expand student access through improved information and communication technology infrastructure
  - a. Continue to develop and implement components of the Open Learning Environment beyond those included in the Open Knowledge Environment Project, which is now nearing completion (See Quality Goal 3, page 18)
  - b. Develop and implement an online information and support system for prospective adult learners through the AU Alberta Adult Learner Information and Recruitment Micro-Website Project

#### **Enrolment Plan**

In response to enrolment challenges, AU's Enrolment Management Committee is instituting service improvements, facilitating process and system remedies, enhancing retention activities and supports and focusing on marketing and the development of new markets.

Increases are expected across the board in undergraduate and graduate enrolment. Enrolment in graduate programs is expected to grow by an average of 2.3 per cent over the next three years, while total undergraduate enrolment is expected to rise by an average of 2.2 per cent. Students are expected to register for 73,300 courses in 2011–12.

The following table shows projected enrolment growth by program band (full load equivalents):

	<b>2009–10</b> (Actual)	<b>2010–11</b> (Estimated*)	<b>2011–12</b> (Targeted)	<b>2012–13</b> (Targeted)	<b>2013–14</b> (Targeted)
Undergraduate Students					
Bachelor of Arts	406.9	396	412	428	445
Bachelor of General Studies	80.6	74	75	77	78
Bachelor of Administration	35.4	23	15	8	7
Bachelor of Commerce	221.3	252	260	270	280
Bachelor of Nursing	367.7	330	342	348	348
Bachelor of Science	74.6	78	80	82	84
Bachelor of Science in Computing and Information Systems	51.6	54	56	58	60
Bachelor of Professional Arts	148.9	154	160	166	172
Bachelor of Health Administration	26.3	29	30	32	33
Bachelor of Management	249.5	228	237	246	256
Bachelor of Human Resources and Labour Relations	62.3	58	60	62	64
Open Studies	4,399.9	4,425	4,525	4,605	4,690
Diploma and Certificate Programs	91.9	98	102	106	110
Total Undergraduate	6,216.9	6,199	6,354	6,488	6,627
Graduate Students					
Doctor of Education	16.0	23	29	35	35
Doctor of Business Administration	9.8	12	21	26	30
Master of Distance Education	100.0	101	103	105	107
Master of Business Administration	332.9	340	342	345	360
Master of Arts – Integrated Studies	220.5	215	220	228	235
Master of Counselling	140.7	145	147	150	152
Master of Health Studies	187.6	185	189	192	196
Master of Nursing	270.0	270	270	272	275
Master of Science in Information Systems	86.1	82	84	86	88
Diploma and Certificate Programs	120.9	124	128	132	136
Total Graduate	1,484.5	1,497	1,533	1,571	1,614
Total Enrolment	7,701.4	7,696	7,887	8059	8,241

<sup>\*</sup>Estimate based on comparison of results for the first three quarters (April-December 2010 to April-December 2009) for rate.

The number of Alberta residents taking courses through AU is targeted to grow by an average of 3.7 per cent per year during the course of this three-year plan, as shown below:

	<b>2009–10</b> (Actual)	<b>2010–11</b> (Estimated*)			<b>2013–14</b> (Targeted)
Number of Alberta students	13,347	13,480	14,020	14,580	15,017
Per cent increase		1%	4%	4%	3%

<sup>\*</sup>Estimate based on comparison of results for the first three quarters (April–December 2010 to April–December 2009) for rate. Individualized study is increasing at a higher rate; estimated total reflects transfer of AU-MRC BA and BN programs to Mount Royal University.

#### **Performance Measures**

- Projects identified in the Enrolment Management Plan are completed.
- Student awards have increased at both the undergraduate and graduate level.
- Implementation of an international recruitment plan is underway.
- General enrolment targets have been met.
- International enrolment targets have been met.
- Access related components of the Open Knowledge Environment Project are fully implemented.
- The AU Alberta Adult Learner Information and Recruitment Micro-Website is operational.
- Course and program completion rates have increased.
- Graduate satisfaction ratings are maintained or improved.
- The graduate employment rate is maintained or improved.
- Student satisfaction ratings are maintained or improved.

#### Quality

AU will continue to focus on the delivery of a wide range of high-quality online and distance education courses and programs at the undergraduate and graduate level. In order to deliver a quality learning experience, it will continue its efforts to enhance course development, student services and the information and communication technology on which its operations are based.

#### Goals

- 1. Develop and enhance programs and courses
  - a. Engage in curriculum renewal to ensure programs are meeting learner needs (through program reviews)
  - b. Implement recommendations from program reviews completed in 2010
  - c. Investigate and implement new program offerings including doctoral program development
  - d. Continue to transition courses to the online environment through the Course Digitization for Online Learning Project
    - i. examination and reassessment of learning outcomes
    - ii. redesign of courses for online learning environment
    - iii. addition of media options
- 2. Support student success and engagement
  - a. Further realign student services to support student success (disability services, advising services, PLAR, tutor-student relationship, liaison services)
  - b. Continue to integrate e-student services (See Goal 3 below)
  - c. Continue to develop initiatives that support student success, retention and engagement

- 3. Continue to expand learning systems infrastructure
  - a. Implement the components of the Open Learning Environment (See page 26) included in the Open Knowledge Environment Project (scheduled for completion in 2011)
  - b. Plan for development and implementation of components of the Open Learning Environment beyond those included in the Open Knowledge Environment Project

#### **New Programs**

AU continues to develop new programs in response to the demonstrated educational needs of Albertans. Many of these planned programs are collaborative and will lead directly to improved employment opportunities and skills. Most reach out to under-represented groups, particularly Aboriginal people and young men, and all are innovative, creating and supporting remote learning communities, helping more people access post-secondary education and providing needed program options for high needs professions.

Planned programs are at various stages of development and launch dates are dependent on availability of funding. In the short-term, AU is working on providing additional laddering opportunities to increase transfer options for students at Campus Alberta institutions. The following new programs are planned for 2011–12:

Post-Baccalaureate Diploma in Architecture

BA major/concentration in philosophy major/concentration in education studies

B.Sc. major/concentration in architecture

Development of the following programs remains under consideration, but progress is dependent on the availability of funding:

PhD health disciplines

BA major in environmental studies major in Kainai Studies (with Red Crow College)

B.Sc. major/concentration in applied mathematics major/concentration in finance and mathematics

Collaborative BA (with Medicine Hat College)

Certificate in Adult Education (with Red Deer College)

Cree, Blackfoot and Michif language preservation (in collaboration with Red Crow Maskawachees and Tribal Councils)

Module development in professions (including ESL for professionals) and science and technology transition from high school (targeted at young men)

#### Performance Measures

- Student satisfaction ratings are maintained or improved.
- Proposed components of Open Knowledge Environment Project are fully implemented by 2011.
- Program review recommendations are implemented.
- Program reviews for 2011 are completed.
- Course Digitization for Online Learning Project is completed.
- Proposed new programs are operational on schedule.

#### Research

AU will continue its efforts to foster and expand research and scholarship activities, to strengthen financial support for research initiatives and to increase the breadth of research activities undertaken. The university intends to maintain its leadership role in the open access movement.

For detailed information on AU's research strategies and priorities, please refer to the *Institutional Research Plan*.

#### Goals

- 1. Build research capacity in specific areas: science, technology and innovation
  - a. Build research capacity across the academy
  - b. Expand research initiatives within faculties
  - c. Review and update existing research policy or develop new policies where they are needed
  - d. Maintain library resources in support of research and scholarship
- 2. Strengthen support for research initiatives
  - a. Seek funding from governments, research agencies and industry for research institutes and specific research projects
  - b. Seek funding from governments, research agencies and industry for sponsored research within faculties
  - c. Encourage research partnerships with industry

#### **Performance Measures**

- Success with national research council applications has improved.
- Research funding and the number of funding sources have increased.
- The number of refereed publications and creative works has increased.
- Sponsored research as a percentage of provincial grants has increased.
- Research policies are updated as needed, and new policies are developed where policy gaps existed.

#### Sustainability

AU will continue to strive to secure and steward the resources needed for its faculty members, staff and students to achieve their full potential. It will focus its efforts on broadening, leveraging and expanding funding in support of the university's core mission: removing barriers to post-secondary study and providing a high-quality learning experience. The university will continue to retain and recruit the very best faculty and staff members in order to achieve the goals and objectives outlined in the *Strategic University Plan*. It will strive to improve internal communication and university-wide involvement in planning and decision making through refining and improving its governance structure.

#### Goals

- 1. Continue with ongoing governance review
  - a. Continue with revision of AU regulations in consultation with Advanced Education and Technology
  - b. Restructure current committees given new governance structures (faculties)
  - c. Continue to review and update policies institution wide (finance and services, academic, human resources, technology, infrastructure sustainability and advancement)
  - d. Continue to identify policy gaps and develop new policies where they are required

- 2. Allocate resources equitably through formal, transparent processes
  - a. Develop and implement a new budget model that promotes revenue growth and rewards performance
  - b. Continue to introduce and refine policies and guidelines to improve the university's financial position
- 3. Streamline business operations and improve processes, systems and controls
  - a. Review renewal options for administrative systems (finance, human resources, procurement, payroll)
  - b. Continue to implement the strategic enterprise risk management process
  - c. Continue to pursue collaborative service and procurement opportunities through Campus Alberta
- 4. Broaden and expand revenue sources
  - a. Strategically manage enrolment to achieve growth targets
  - b. Obtain more research funding
  - c. Maximize revenue generated through strategic partnerships
  - d. Maximize revenue generated by supporting the work of the Advancement Office in procuring donations and grants from public and private sources
  - e. Continue to work with federal, provincial and municipal governments to maximize operational and special initiatives grant funding
  - f. Broaden financial support for information and communication technology infrastructure
  - g. Seek sustaining funding for information and communication technology
- 5. Ensure the availability of quality and affordable facilities that support the university's strategic goals
  - a. Open the new Academic Research Centre at AU Athabasca on budget
  - b. Review and implement renovation plans for the existing building at AU Athabasca
  - c. Continue to investigate and, where appropriate, implement opportunities for collaborating with other Campus Alberta institutions to satisfy AU's space needs in Greater Edmonton and Calgary
  - d. Identify opportunities, institution-wide, for improving environmental sustainability
- 6. Continue to enhance records management and archival collection resources and services
- 7. Continue to implement improvements to human resources management processes
  - a. Continue to enhance employee services
  - b. Enhance communication with faculty and staff members
  - c. Improve employee performance assessment processes
  - d. Continue to implement the employee health and wellness program
  - e. Develop a multi-year strategic Human Resources Plan
- 8. Engage faculty members, tutors and academic coaches, and staff members through recognition
  - a. Expand teaching excellence initiatives
  - b. Link faculty awards to academic plan priorities
  - c. Expand staff recognition awards
  - d. Continue to support leadership and employee development programs (succession planning)

#### **Performance Measures**

- The university's Edmonton and Calgary locations are secured.
- The Academic Research Centre opens on budget.
- The redevelopment plan for the existing building at AU Athabasca is implemented.
- Donations and grants (private, public, research) have increased in number and value.
- The policy review is completed, and new policies have been approved and implemented where appropriate.
- A new budget model has been approved and implemented.
- Revenue derived from partnerships has grown.
- Employee services have been enhanced.
- An improved employee performance assessment process has been developed and implemented.
- Members of the university receive greater recognition for performance excellence.
- Internal communication is enhanced through improvements to the university website.
- The number of employees participating in professional development has increased.
- · Leadership development is ongoing.

#### Community

AU will continue to promote collaboration and foster leadership in the communities it serves. The university will strive to build mutually beneficial partnerships with a variety of groups and communities across the country, particularly in rural, remote and Aboriginal communities.

#### Goals

- 1. Continue to build mutually beneficial partnerships with the community
  - a. Expand alumni engagement
  - b. Continue to build solid relations with municipal, provincial and federal governments
  - c. Expand industry research and business partnerships
  - d. Enhance educational collaborations that support student access and success
  - e. Develop, with community partners, a plan to observe the Athabasca Centennial
  - f. Continue to support Science Outreach Athabasca
- 2. Expand AU's role in Campus Alberta
  - a. Continue to collaborate with other Campus Alberta institutions
  - b. Provide leadership in e-learning for the education sector and other e-learning sectors in Alberta
  - c. Increase engagement and collaboration with the K-12 system in Alberta

#### Performance Measures

- Alumni members are engaged in AU (Donations and attendance at alumni events have increased).
- The number of industry partnerships has increased.
- Collaboration with other Campus Alberta institutions and the K-12 system has increased.
- Governments' understanding and knowledge of AU have grown, and funding streams are maintained or improved.
- An Athabasca Centennial observance has been developed with support from community stakeholders.
- AU is central to Campus Alberta initiatives.

# Financial and Budget Information

Athabasca University is committed to a sustainable budget strategy that aligns the available resources with the mission and priorities articulated in the *Strategic University Plan: 2006–2011*. Until a new strategic university plan is finalized later this year, the goals of the 2006–11 plan will continue to guide key budget priorities.

## Statements of Revenue and Expenses

#### **Statement of Operations**

Year Ended March 31 (thousands of dollars)

Undergraduate student fees Graduate student fees I8,087 I9,056 I9,647 Sales of goods and services I12,731 I1,983 I1,397 Research and other grants I0,140 Amortization of DCC I,091 Investment Income I	
Undergraduate student fees Graduate student fees I 8,087 Sales of goods and services I 12,731 Research and other grants Amortization of DCC I 1,091 Investment Income Donations I 136,464 I 123,615  Expenses**  Salaries and benefits Fees and purchased services Materials and supplies Communications and travel Amortization Facilities costs Facilities costs Scholarships  43,043 42,633 44,296 49,647 19,056 19,647 19,647 19,056 19,647 19,647 19,647 19,647 19,647 11,983 11,397 11,983 11,397 11,983 11,397 12,758 3,123 1,281 1,281 1,281 1,281 1,281 1,281 1,281 1,281 1,281 1,281 1,281 1,281 1,281 1,281 1,281 1,281 1,281 1,281 1,281 1,281 1,281 1,281 1,281 1,281 1,281 1,281 1,281 1,281 1,281 1,281 1,281 1,281 1,281 1,281 1,281 1,281 1,281 1,281 1,281 1,281 1,487 1,281 1,487 1,472 1,094 1,187 1,094 1,187 1,094 1,187 1,094 1,187 1,094 1,187 1,187 1,094 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1,187 1	
Graduate student fees       18,087       19,056       19,647       19,647         Sales of goods and services       12,731       11,983       11,397         Research and other grants       10,140       2,163       1,487         Amortization of DCC       1,091       2,758       3,123         Investment Income       941       1,558       1,281         Donations       3,120       926       796         Expenses**         Salaries and benefits       83,034       83,228       83,997       36         Fees and purchased services       33,484       17,036       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094	41,845
Sales of goods and services       12,731       11,983       11,397         Research and other grants       10,140       2,163       1,487         Amortization of DCC       1,091       2,758       3,123         Investment Income       941       1,558       1,281         Donations       3,120       926       796         Expenses**         Salaries and benefits       83,034       83,228       83,997       38         Fees and purchased services       33,484       17,036       17,094       17         Materials and supplies       9,095       9,493       9,448         Communications and travel       6,643       6,418       6,222         Amortization       3,282       4,925       6,606         Facilities costs       2,475       2,743       2,219         Scholarships       621       1,187       472         138,634       125,030       126,058       12	46,248
Research and other grants       10,140       2,163       1,487         Amortization of DCC       1,091       2,758       3,123         Investment Income       941       1,558       1,281         Donations       3,120       926       796         136,464       123,615       124,083       12         Expenses**         Salaries and benefits       83,034       83,228       83,997       3         Fees and purchased services       33,484       17,036       17,094       17         Materials and supplies       9,095       9,493       9,448         Communications and travel       6,643       6,418       6,222         Amortization       3,282       4,925       6,606         Facilities costs       2,475       2,743       2,219         Scholarships       621       1,187       472         138,634       125,030       126,058       12	20,272
Amortization of DCC       1,091       2,758       3,123         Investment Income       941       1,558       1,281         Donations       3,120       926       796         136,464       123,615       124,083       12         Expenses**         Salaries and benefits       83,034       83,228       83,997       38         Fees and purchased services       33,484       17,036       17,094       17         Materials and supplies       9,095       9,493       9,448         Communications and travel       6,643       6,418       6,222         Amortization       3,282       4,925       6,606         Facilities costs       2,475       2,743       2,219         Scholarships       621       1,187       472         138,634       125,030       126,058       12	11,511
Investment Income   941   1,558   1,281   926   796	546
Donations       3,120       926       796         136,464       123,615       124,083       12         Expenses**         Salaries and benefits       83,034       83,228       83,997       83         Fees and purchased services       33,484       17,036       17,094       17         Materials and supplies       9,095       9,493       9,448       6,222         Amortizations and travel       6,643       6,418       6,222       6,606       6,643       6,418       6,222       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6,606       6	3,233
Expenses**     83,034     83,228     83,997     83       Fees and purchased services     33,484     17,036     17,094     17,094       Materials and supplies     9,095     9,493     9,448       Communications and travel     6,643     6,418     6,222       Amortization     3,282     4,925     6,606       Facilities costs     2,475     2,743     2,219       Scholarships     621     1,187     472       138,634     125,030     126,058     12	1,281
Expenses**         Salaries and benefits       83,034       83,228       83,997       83,228         Fees and purchased services       33,484       17,036       17,094         Materials and supplies       9,095       9,493       9,448         Communications and travel       6,643       6,418       6,222         Amortization       3,282       4,925       6,606         Facilities costs       2,475       2,743       2,219         Scholarships       621       1,187       472         138,634       125,030       126,058       12	813
Salaries and benefits       83,034       83,228       83,997       88         Fees and purchased services       33,484       17,036       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094       17,094	25,750
Fees and purchased services       33,484       17,036       17,094         Materials and supplies       9,095       9,493       9,448         Communications and travel       6,643       6,418       6,222         Amortization       3,282       4,925       6,606         Facilities costs       2,475       2,743       2,219         Scholarships       621       1,187       472         138,634       125,030       126,058       12	
Materials and supplies       9,095       9,493       9,448         Communications and travel       6,643       6,418       6,222         Amortization       3,282       4,925       6,606         Facilities costs       2,475       2,743       2,219         Scholarships       621       1,187       472         138,634       125,030       126,058       12	85,725
Communications and travel       6,643       6,418       6,222         Amortization       3,282       4,925       6,606         Facilities costs       2,475       2,743       2,219         Scholarships       621       1,187       472         138,634       125,030       126,058       12	17,279
Amortization       3,282       4,925       6,606         Facilities costs       2,475       2,743       2,219         Scholarships       621       1,187       472         138,634       125,030       126,058       12	9,537
Facilities costs       2,475       2,743       2,219         Scholarships       621       1,187       472         138,634       125,030       126,058       12	5,940
Scholarships         621         1,187         472           138,634         125,030         126,058         12	6,708
<b>138,634 125,030</b> 126,058 12	2,134
	352
	27,675
Excess of expense over revenue	
	1,925)
Increase in Pension Liability	
	(2,000)
Excess of expense over revenue \$ (2,171) \$ (3,437) \$ (3,948) \$ (3,948)	3,925)

<sup>\*</sup> Revenue and expenditures in these years are preliminary and will be refined in future year budgets.

<sup>\*\*</sup> Includes expenditures related to planned investments from restricted reserves.

#### Statement of Cash Flows

Year Ended March 31 (thousands of dollars)

(thousands of donars)		
	APPROVED BUDGET 2010–2011	APPROVED BUDGET 2011-2012
Cash provided from (used in) operating activities:		
Excess of expense over revenue	\$ (2,171)	\$ (3,437)
Amortization of capital assets and deferred course development costs	3,282	4,925
Amortization of deferred capital and deferred course development contributions Other items not affecting cash	(1,091)	(2,758) 2,022
other rems not uncering easir	20	752
Change in non-cash working capital	20	732
Change in accounts receivable, inventory of course materials		
and prepaid expenses	(122)	(506)
Change in current liabilities, except current portion of obligation under capital lease	1,374	(8,332)
unuer capitai lease		
	1,272	(8,086)
Cash provided from (used in) investing and financing activities:		
Decrease (increase) in non-current investments, net	20,504	5,774
Capital asset and collection acquisitions, net	(24,543)	(6,948)
Endowment awards and contributions, net	-	2,029
Deferred capital contributions	1,172	6,077
	(2,867)	6,932
Increase (decrease) in cash and short-term investments	(1,595)	(1,154)
Cash and short-term investments, beginning of year *	2,714	3,288
Cash and short-term investments, end of year	\$ 1,119	\$ 2,133

<sup>\*</sup> Note: The beginning of year cash and short-term investments amount is projected based on forecasted operating results for the previous year. The 2011-12 amount varies from the approved budget amount for 2010-11 by the variances for 2009-10 and 2010-11.

# **Budget Assumptions**

Undergraduate course registration is expected to grow by approximately three percent in each of the next three years, while graduate course registration is expected to grow by an annual average of two per cent. Overall, students are expected to register for 73,300 courses in 2011–12.

Key budget drivers were considered in developing the 2011–12 budget models. The drivers are forecast with reference to existing plans, market conditions and other sources.

Drivers (annual % increase unless otherwise noted)	2010-11 Budget	2010-11 Forecast	2011-12 Budget	2012-13 Plan	2013-14 Plan
Course registration					
Undergraduate registration	2%	0%	1%	3%	3%
Graduate registration	4%	4%	0.5%	0.6%	2.1%
Financial assumptions					
Alberta Government base grant increase	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Tutor allocation per undergrad registration	\$244	\$244	\$247	\$247	\$250
Employee benefits (as a % of salaries)					
AUFA	21%	22%	22%	23%	23%
AUPE	25%	25%	25%	25%	25%
CUPE	9.6%	10%	10.7%	11%	11%
Macroeconomic drivers					
Alberta – CPI	1.5%	1.7%	2%	2.1%	2.1%
Investment returns	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%

#### **Deficits**

AU will be reporting a deficit in 2011–12, derived from two components: strategic investments from reserves (Restricted Net Assets) and Universities Academic Pension Plan liability adjustments (Unrestricted Net Assets).

#### Strategic Investment from Reserves (Restricted Net Assets)

In all cases these investments are for one time or capital projects. To date, key new initiatives have included information technology systems, new programs and infrastructure. The 2011–12 budget anticipates a \$1,415,000 draw on reserves, comprising the following:

- carry forward of matching contribution for Knowledge Infrastructure Program funded projects (\$500,000)
- Strategic Investment Fund (\$750,000)
- Technology Enhanced Knowledge Research Institute (\$165,000)

#### UAPP Pension Liability Adjustments (Unrestricted Net Assets)

In 2008–09, the Alberta universities and Alberta Advanced Education and Technology agreed that the appropriate share of the unfunded liability for the Universities Academic Pension Plan would be recorded on university financial statements. This liability is adjusted each year based on actuarial valuations or extrapolations. The 2011–12 budget reflects a \$2,022,000 provision. As this is not a cash transaction, it is not considered a draw on university cash reserves (restricted net assets); however, it does contribute a negative variance on the Statement of Operations.

#### **Tuition**

Undergraduate student fee increases of 0.2 per cent are planned for 2011–12. Until now, graduate program tuition fees have covered the cost of learning resources as well as tuition. The proposed 2011–12 budget reflects a decoupling of the learning resource component from the tuition fee, as shown on the table below. Representatives of the Athabasca University Students' Union and the Athabasca University Graduate Students' Association have been consulted with regard to these tuition fee modifications, which will come into effect on September 1, 2011.

#### AU's tuition fee projections for 2010–11 to 2013–14 are as follows:

	1	2010–2011 Actual	2	2011-2012 Proposed	2	012–2013 Plan*		13–2014 Plan*
Course-Based Fees								
Undergraduate Student Fees Course fee (3-credit) Percentage change	\$	465 1.5%	\$	466 0.2%	\$	470 0.9%	\$	474 0.9%
Graduate Student Fees **								
Master of Distance Education Course fee Learning Resource Fee	\$	1,450 included	\$ \$	1,350 150	\$ \$	1,400 150	\$ \$	1,450 150
Master of Health Studies and Master of Nursing Course fee Learning Resource Fee	\$	1,145 included	\$ \$	1,250 50	\$ \$	1,275 50	\$ \$50	1,300
Master of Arts—Integrated Studies Course fee Learning Resource Fee	\$	1,460 included	\$ \$	1,300 160	\$ \$	1,340 160	\$ \$	1,385 160
Post-Baccalaureate Diploma in Architecture Course fee Learning Resource Fee			\$ \$	1,300 160	\$ \$	1,340 160	\$ \$	1,385 160
Master of Science—Information Systems Course fee Learning Resource Fee	\$	1,425 included	\$ \$	1,300 160	\$ \$	1,315 160	\$ \$	1,340 160
Graduate Diploma Heritage Resources Management Course fee Learning Resource Fee	\$	1,460 included	\$ \$	1,300 160	\$ \$	1,340 160	\$ \$	1,385 160
Graduate Diploma in Legislative Drafting Course fee Learning Resource Fee	\$	1,460 included	\$ \$	<b>1,300</b> 160	\$ \$	1,340 160	\$ \$	1,385 160
Program-Based Fees								
Graduate Student Fees **								
Master of Business Administration Program tuition Learning Resource Fee	\$	43,500 included	\$ \$	35,140 9,360	\$ \$	35,590 9,360	\$ \$	36,090 9,360
Doctor of Business Administration Program tuition Learning Resource Fee	\$	52,500 included	\$ \$	47,355 5,145	\$ \$	47,855 5,145	\$ \$	48,405 5,145
Doctorate of Education in Distance Education Program tuition Learning Resource Fee	\$	42,280 included	\$ \$	42,850 1,650	\$ \$	43,750 1,650	\$ \$	44,200 1,650
Master of Counselling Program tuition Learning Resource Fee	\$	21,200 included	\$ \$	22,290 600	\$ \$	22,530 600	\$	22,770 \$600

<sup>\*</sup> The fee changes are preliminary and will be refined in future year budgets.

\*\* AU Graduate Students' Association fee of \$12 per credit is over and above the graduate program tuition fees stated above.

# **Resource Implications**

#### Access and Quality

AU is committed to supporting access and quality initiatives within the limits of available resources. The university will continue to seek special grant funding, private donations and other types of external funding in support of such initiatives.

Key goals for 2011–12 are to maintain teaching and research excellence and to continue to remove barriers to learning for students. As a partner in Campus Alberta, AU is committed to collaborating with other key stakeholders to provide high quality learning opportunities. In order to continue to deliver a quality student learning experience, the university will continue its efforts to enhance the course development processes, student services and the information and communication technology on which its operations are based. In a context of accelerating developments and increasing security challenges, the long-term sustainability of AU's information and communication technology infrastructure remains a concern.

#### Research

Resource implications relate to the activities of AU's research teams and include the need for matching allocations to funding from the major granting agencies. The university continues to seek sustaining funding for its research institutes.

#### Information and Communication Technology

Continuous renewal of AU's information and communication technology infrastructure is critical to the university's ability to meet its mandate. Inability to renew the information and communication technology infrastructure would substantially impair AU's capacity to perform its day-to-day operations. Both AU's distributed staff and student body require consistently performing systems to carry out their respective activities. The flexibility and functionality of existing systems must be enhanced to assure staff productivity and a high quality student learning experience.

#### The Open Learning Environment

AU's information and communication technology planning process has culminated in the vision of the Open Learning Environment, an innovative online post-secondary system in which cutting-edge technologies integrate with advanced pedagogical practice to form a supportive, student-centred, world-class learning environment. The Open Learning Environment will encompass all aspects of the student's relationship with the university, from initial advising to lifelong learning and knowledge creation, establishing a new standard in post-secondary education. It is AU's intention to share these new developments with other members of Campus Alberta, allowing Alberta students to benefit from world-class research into online pedagogy and individualized access to world-class programs and courses.

Through constant development of the Open Learning Environment, AU will create a virtual campus that will provide its distributed student body with an outstanding learning experience. The ability to tailor course delivery to an individual student's learning style will allow many Albertans who would not have entered or completed a university program to succeed and to avail themselves of the opportunities afforded by post-secondary education.

The articulated 2020 vision for AU's Open Learning Environment is no small undertaking, and its realization will require the resources of all AU stakeholders. To achieve this vision, the university has created pathways to the adoption and use of information and communication technologies over the next 10 years. Combining excellence in learning and research with state-of-the-art student services and computing infrastructure through the adoption and adaption of these technologies will have a transformative effect on the institution.

The component parts of the plan have been grouped into individualized and self-contained projects. This grouping is not to imply that the parts are separate from one another but simply that their achievement requires them to be divided into projects of manageable scope and size. In addition, a natural sequence of steps emerges in all projects, and the appropriate sequence for realization of the Open Learning Environment is reflected in the development stages identified below.

Priority Information Technology Projects	Date	Total Cost
ICT infrastructure renewal	2012-21	\$ 9,284,285
Learning management system (Phase 1)	2012-15	1,853,591
Content management system (Phase 1)	2012-15	3,531,447
Smart identification and encryption systems	2012-14, 2018-20	2,679,857
Assessment and exam system	2012-14	2,527,236
Academetrics system	2012-15	2,555,958
Administrative systems renewal	2012-14	4,300,000
Student information system upgrade (Phase 1)	2012-14	1,704,296
Articulations and advising system	2012-14	2,409,586
Enrolment and student management systems	2012	264,407
ICT disaster recovery and risk mitigation	2013-21	26,847,360
Learning systems innovations	2015-18	5,092,104
Learning management system (Phase 2) – e-portfolios	2018-20	4,078,242
Student information system upgrade (Phase 2)	2018-20	7,187,055
Content management system (Phase 2) – learning objects	2016–19	5,503,550
Total		\$ 79,818,974

#### Capital Plan

In 2011–12, \$12.9 million in strategic capital investment is planned. Of that amount, \$2.7 million will be funded from reserves unless alternate funding can be secured. The remainder will be externally funded.

#### **Technology Infrastructure**

Information and communication technology projects are critical to the future of the university. The funding of the Open Learning Environment continues to be the university's top capital priority.

Development of the Open Learning Environment has been planned over 10 years with a total estimated capital cost of \$90 million. An \$80 million investment has been requested from the Government of Alberta. Over the past three years the university has been able to advance this initiative with \$7.7 million received from the federal government's Knowledge Infrastructure Program (KIP) as well as \$5 million from its Systems Development reserve. Based on current budget projections \$79.8 million in information technology project work is pending. The proposed budget for 2011–12 reflects a \$5.7 million investment in Information Technology Capital Projects pending funding availability and approval of Governing Council.

#### **Facilities Projects**

Priority capital infrastructure investments for facilities include the following:

**Self-contained Observatory Building, Athabasca District:** Construction of a new optical auroral observatory is planned for 2011–12. It will replace the existing observatory which is declining in usefulness because of increased light pollution in the Athabasca area. The cost of this project, which will be funded by Canada Foundation for Innovation and the Alberta Science and Research Investments Program, is estimated at \$1.3 million.

**Academic and Research Centre, Athabasca:** Construction of the university's 5,343 m<sup>2</sup> Academic and Research Centre building on the main campus in Athabasca is nearing completion, and occupancy is planned for early 2011–12. The cost of construction during 2011–12 is estimated at \$4.9 million.

#### Equipment

Approximately \$15,000 is planned for equipment acquisition in 2011–12.

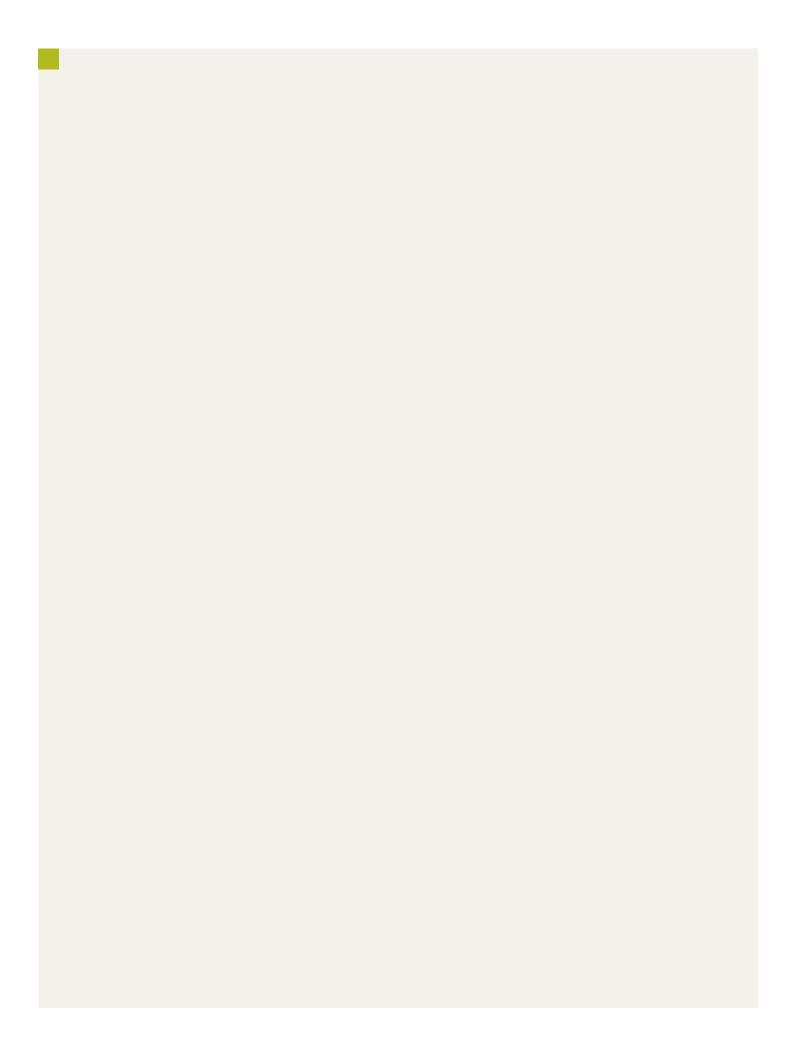
#### Projected Capital and Information and Communication Technology Infrastructure Expenditures and Revenue Sources

(thousands of dollars)

	BUDGET 11-2012	20	PLAN 12-2013	20	PLAN 13-2014	7	TOTAL
Capital and ICT Infrastructure Expenditures							
Land	\$ -	\$	2,000	\$	-	\$	2,000
Buildings, leaseholds and site improvements	6,228		3,995		27,820		38,043
Information technology	5,669		8,819		10,477		24,965
Equipment	1,009		362		82		1,453
Library and art collections	0		125		125		250
	\$ 12,906	\$	15,302	\$	38,504	\$	66,711
External Contributions (provincial and other)							
Building	\$ 6,228	\$	2,995	\$	17,820	\$	27,043
Information technology	3,517		5,523		7,188		16,228
Equipment	994		300		22		1,316
Expenditures Externally Funded	\$ 10,739	\$	8,819	\$	25,030	\$	44,588
Internal Contributions							
From amortization	\$ 2,167	\$	3,483	\$	3,475	\$	9,125
From long-term debt	 0		3,000		10,000	\$	13,000
<b>Expenditures Internally Funded</b>	\$ 2,167	\$	6,483	\$	13,475	\$	22,125
	\$ 12,906	\$	15,302	\$	38,504	\$	66,711

#### Projected Capital and Information and Communication Technology Infrastructure Expenditures

infrastructure Expenditures								
(thousands of dollars)		BUDGET 2011-12		PLAN 2012-13		PLAN 2013-14		TOTAL
Land								
DEBT FUNDED	ф		ф	2.000	ф		d.	2.000
Integrated Learning Centre, Greater Edmonton	\$	-	\$	2,000	\$	-	\$	2,000
Total land	\$	-	\$	2,000	\$	-	\$	2,000
Buildings, leaseholds and site improvements  EXTERNALLY FUNDED								
Academic and Research Centre	\$	4,900	\$	-	\$	-	\$	4,900
Site improvements, Calgary Bow Valley				1,000		1,000		2,000
AU Central main campus building renovation		1 170		1,500		500		2,000
Self-contained observatory building (AUGORI) Office space additions (Learning Communities)		1,178 150				1,178 150		
Infrastructure renewal planning		130		495		495		990
ARBRI Conference, Archival and Interpretive Centre						15,825		15,825
	\$	6,228	\$	2,995	\$	17,820	\$	27,043
DEBT FUNDED								
Integrated Learning Centre, Greater Edmonton	\$	-	\$	1,000	\$	10,000	\$	11,000
	\$	-	\$	1,000	\$	10,000	\$	11,000
Total buildings, leaseholds and site improvements	\$	6,228	\$	3,995	\$	27,820	\$	38,043
Information technology: major projects								
EXTERNALLY FUNDED								
Hardware and software	\$	370	\$	-	\$	-	\$	370
Computing systems Administrative systems		0 2,212		(0)		1,000 2,358		1,000 6,267
Learning and research systems		935		1,697 3,827		3,830		8,592
		3,517		5,523		7,188		16,228
INTERNALLY FUNDED		3,317		3,323		7,100		10,220
Hardware and software	\$	787	\$	800	\$	824	\$	2,411
Computing systems		123		1,790		1,895		3,808
Learning and research systems		1,242		706		570		2,518
	\$	2,152	\$	3,296	\$	3,289	\$	8,737
Total information technology	\$	5,669	\$	8,819	\$	10,477	\$	24,965
Equipment								
EXTERNALLY FUNDED								
Research equipment	\$	994		300		22	\$	1,316
INTERNALLY FUNDED	\$	994	\$	300	\$	22	\$	1,316
Vehicles	\$	_	\$	50	\$	25	\$	75
Research equipment	\$	15	\$	12	\$	35	\$	62
	\$	15	\$	62	\$	60	\$	137
Total equipment	\$	1,009	\$	362	\$	82	\$	1,453
	φ	1,007	ф	302	φ	UL	φ	1,733
<b>Library and art collections</b> Library	\$	125	\$	125	\$	250		
Total library and art collections	\$	123	\$	125	\$	125	\$	250
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	<del>*</del> \$	12,906	\$	15,302		38,504	<del></del>	66,712
IUIAL EAPENDITURES	<b>D</b>	14,900	3	15,502	Þ	30,304	Э	00,712





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