



## INTERNAL NEWS RELEASE

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### **Alberta-North and eCampusAlberta exploring a plan to consolidate organizations**

As demand for distance and online education continues to grow at a rapid pace across Alberta, two of the province's leading organizations in the distance/online education field are taking steps to collaborate and find synergies in the services they offer to the system to support learner success across the province.

The Executive Directors of Alberta-North and eCampusAlberta have received a mandate from their Boards of Directors to develop a plan that explores an amalgamation that could bring increased efficiencies and a sharpened focus on bringing excellence to online and distributed learning in Alberta.

"Alberta-North and eCampusAlberta are looking at the potential ways they can further support the Campus Alberta vision by examining how a streamlined entity may be able to support success in online and distributed learning," says Ralph Weeks, Chair, eCampusAlberta Board of Directors.

Each organization brings a complementary focus to the potential new entity, which could provide a significant benefit to Alberta learners. Alberta-North offers a strong focus on building the capacity of its members to support adult students to participate in online and distance learning endeavours in their home communities. eCampusAlberta brings a strong focus on supporting member institutions to increase access to high quality online learning opportunities, thereby increasing the breadth and diversity of courses and programs available.

"Should a strong case for the integration of these organizations be developed, it could result in a more streamlined entity that has potential to provide comprehensive services to members, learners and communities across Alberta. We recognize that the combined strengths of the two organizations could enable the creation of an integrated continuum of services for online and distance learners," says Don Gnatiuk, Chair, Alberta-North Board of Directors.

For example, eCampusAlberta would be able to leverage the expertise of Alberta-North in supporting students in communities across the province, which would enable member institutions from central and southern regions to work together in developing enhanced services for learners.

Alberta-North is a partnership of six northern colleges and Athabasca University that was formed in 1994. The organization serves northern residents to enable them to participate and succeed in post-secondary education and training opportunities in their communities. On-site facilitators at over 81 Community Access Points provide learning support services, meaningful information and other resources to help students prepare for and develop the skills they need for learning.

eCampusAlberta is a consortium of 15 Alberta post-secondary institutions (11 colleges, two baccalaureate and applied degree universities and two polytechnical institutions) that was established in 2002 to facilitate greater access to high quality online learning opportunities. The organization enables students from across the province to access more than 60 accredited online certificate, diploma and applied degree programs and 600 courses offered by the 15 member institutions.

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