



Listening to Albertans on **Accessibility**

ISSUES AND CONCERNS

- The fact that technical institutes are stretched to the limit is contributing to the growing shortage of skilled trades people in the province. The lack of resources is diminishing the ability of institutions to meet their mandate, and large numbers of qualified applicants are being turned away. Far too many are turned away because of lack of space and equipment.
- In many programs, we are turning away large numbers of students with very high marks, through a rationing system that is often perceived as unfair.
- There is a growing population of aboriginal people who face many barriers in accessing post-secondary education. The government must help this growing population get into post-secondary education.
- The late age at which people enter technical institutes (NAIT average is 26 years of age) results in “lost years of productivity.”
- The government’s emphasis on immigration to address shortages in skilled labour is resulting in too many Albertans being denied an opportunity for education in these fields.
- The government thinks it is cheaper to import graduates than to train them, so fewer Albertans get access and outsiders provide more of the skilled positions.
- The government has simply failed to do the planning on the overall issue of access, and has also failed to commit the necessary resources.
- There is a serious contradiction in that we send the message that having a post-secondary education is increasingly essential, but we then deny access to so many qualified students.
- Older students face consistent roadblocks and their problems are not being addressed.
- With such high grade point averages required for entrance to many programs, we are moving towards “education only for the brightest” and we are ignoring other important qualities.
- Post secondary education used to be seen as a right of every Alberta student; now it is seen as a privilege.



SUGGESTED DIRECTIONS

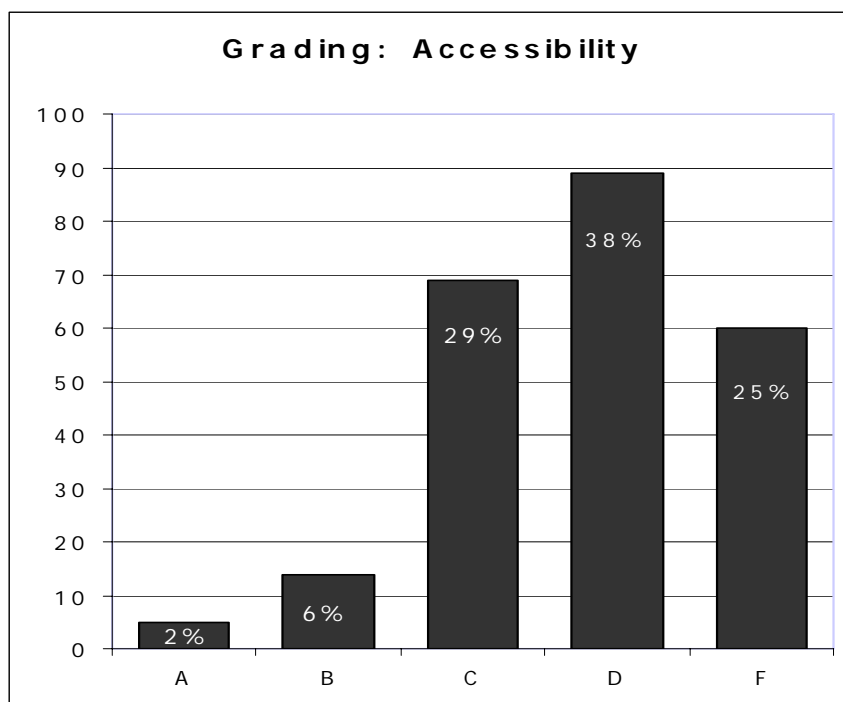
- We need to provide the space and equipment to allow technical institutions to offer the programs necessary to meet the need for skilled trades and occupations.
- We must provide institutions with the resources necessary to compete with business and industry for qualified instructors.
- We can overcome some problems of space and overcrowding in urban institutional settings by shifting some technical programs to rural settings, thereby making rural Alberta more dynamic in the process.
- It may be possible to alleviate some part of the need for space by internal transfers from programs with declining enrolment to those with high needs.
- Concentrate on increasing access for Albertans rather than importing graduates from elsewhere.
- The government should take the money away from the testing program in K-12, and put it into a better application/selection process in PSE.
- We must get beyond simply using high marks as the basis for selection, and find ways to recognize and utilize other important qualities in making decisions on admission.

The government should be pouring money into GPRC to provide the additional instructors, support systems, student housing and support staff needed for GPRC to deliver complete degrees across the standard university spectrum by 2006/07.
Ruth, Grande Prairie



Public Response to the Question:

How would you grade the government's commitment to ensure that there is a space for every willing and qualified Albertan in our post-secondary education system?



Report Card Key

A = exemplary performance

B = more than satisfactory performance

C = some concerns, but satisfactory performance overall

D = does not meet expectations, poor performance

F = complete breakdown of responsibility, dismal performance