



A REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL ON POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

2002/03 to 2008/09

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Executive Summary

PRA Inc. was engaged to conduct a review of the Council on Post-Secondary Education (COPSE), which was to encompass the seven years from 2002/03 to 2008/09. PRA used a qualitative methodology to carry out this review, involving hour-long interviews with 42 stakeholders.

This review covered a wide range of topics on which COPSE received mixed reviews. Most stakeholders praised COPSE staff as being helpful, knowledgeable, and effective. Indeed, Council staff was the most common strength of the organization. Many also noted that COPSE played a valuable role within the system by maintaining post-secondary education as a government priority, securing funding, and facilitating the growth of the post-secondary system. Specifically, some stakeholders identified funding for new programs, Aboriginals learners, distance education, and multi-year funding as some of its successes over the last seven years. Other stakeholders said COPSE has been particularly effective as an intermediary, in that it has acted as both a buffer and a bridge between the government and post-secondary institutions.

Most of the concerns stakeholders discussed about COPSE are not about what it did over the past seven years, but instead are about what they believe it should have been doing. Indeed, stakeholders throughout the interviews reiterate two broad themes:

- ▶ COPSE has not done a good job of explaining what it wants to accomplish, as they did not believe it had clearly defined goals or a plan of how to achieve them
- ▶ COPSE has not been as open or transparent as it should be in some of its actions

Given that the Council is the government's chosen mechanism for overseeing aspects of the post-secondary education system, COPSE needs to develop a plan for the system that clearly outlines a vision, goals, and its role. While legislation has identified some of COPSE's roles and responsibilities, these appear to be far more expansive than what the organization is actually doing. Thus, stakeholders said it would be useful for COPSE to identify explicitly its role and responsibilities within the system to reflect what it currently does, and also what it plans to do over five years. The goals COPSE establishes should be the basis for any future review of the Council.

The issue of transparency builds on this theme. To be more transparent, an organization needs to be clear about what it does. Transparency requires COPSE to clarify its role as an intermediary between the institutions and government, and as advisor to both institutions and government. It means defining its powers, duties, roles, and responsibilities in practical terms. Transparency also suggests providing stakeholders with a summary of what COPSE recommends to the government and why, providing feedback to stakeholders following consultations and on the information they supply, and developing clearer criteria against which applications and proposals will be evaluated.

While this review identifies 14 recommendations, most are based on the broad changes of seeing COPSE clarify its roles, establishing goals, and being more transparent in its actions.

1.0 Introduction

The Council on Post-Secondary Education (COPSE) was created through an Act of the provincial legislature in November 1996 and has been in existence since April 1997.

COPSE is comprised of 11 government-appointed members, supported by a staff Secretariat of 13 provincial civil servants. According to its legislation, the Council is responsible for the allocation of funding to the province's universities and colleges, approves university and college programming, provides advice and policy direction to the government, and promotes fiscal responsibility and accountability in the post-secondary education sector. The Council functions as an intermediary between the post-secondary institutions and the government.

The Secretariat undertakes activities and projects designed to fulfill the mandate and goals established by Council and the Department of Advanced Education and Literacy. The Secretariat also works in consultation with the colleges and universities to support Council members in the development of policy and financial accountability.

According to the Council's legislation, an organizational and operational review of the Council on Post-Secondary Education is to be undertaken to consider its performance in its management role of Manitoba's post-secondary education. In 2002, a review¹ was undertaken that proposed several recommendations, which prompted a response from COPSE and the government.²

PRA Inc. was engaged to carry out this current review, which was to encompass the seven years from 2002/03 to 2008/09.

1.1 Objectives of the research

The objectives of this review are to consider progress made since the last review, which examined progress made from 1997 to 2002, and to gather new information on initiatives undertaken and the continued effectiveness and performance of COPSE as a corporate body.

More particularly, the review is to gather stakeholders' impressions of:

- ▶ progress made since the 1997-2002 review;
- ▶ COPSE's ongoing effectiveness of carrying out its mandate, program approval and funding processes, and relations with stakeholders;
- ▶ initiatives undertaken by COPSE in the current review period; and
- ▶ the overall impact of COPSE on Manitoba's post-secondary education system.

¹ JRM Associates, A Review of the Manitoba Council on Post-Secondary Education, November 10, 2002 (often referred to as the Mallea Report).

² Response of the Government of Manitoba and the Council on Post-Secondary Education to the Review of the Manitoba Council on Post-Secondary Education, March 2003.

1.2 Methodology

This qualitative review was conducted through interviews with stakeholders. PRA conducted all interviews by telephone for approximately one hour. COPSE drafted an interview guide, which PRA reviewed and suggested modifications to. The final version of the interview guide is found in Appendix A.

COPSE created a list of potential participants and, together with PRA, identified representatives from key stakeholder groups who were to be invited to participate in an interview. The list included representatives from post-secondary student organizations, faculty organizations, college and university administrations and governance bodies, government, and COPSE. The data gathering phase involved the following steps:

- ▶ PRA contacted stakeholders to advise them of the review and to schedule an interview. As mentioned, the interviews were to be an hour long, but many stakeholders gave more of their time to cover all issues.
- ▶ A letter explaining the research as well as an overview document providing some background information and a list of the general themes to be covered in the interview was sent electronically to stakeholders. These documents can be found in Appendix B.
- ▶ Given the wide range of topics to discuss, and depending on the knowledge of the stakeholders, the interviews could last well over an hour. However, many of these stakeholders had limited time and, for many, an hour was all that was reasonably available. Working with COPSE, PRA assigned priority ranking to questions, ensuring the most important were asked of all respondents.
- ▶ We conducted the interviews by telephone at a time that was convenient for the stakeholders. For accuracy, each stakeholder was asked if the interview could be audio-recorded. All stakeholders agreed, and were informed that the recording would only be used to help in the preparation of the final report, and that none of the comments made during those interviews would be attributed to any individual.

In total, 42 individuals participated, most often in one-on-one interviews, although occasionally two or three individuals were interviewed as a group. A list of stakeholders who participated in this review can be found in Appendix C.

Table 1 shows the type of stakeholders interviewed as part of this review.

Table 1: Types of stakeholders	
Type	Number
Institutional representatives	
Presidents	7
Vice-Presidents	11
Board of Governors	3
Other	3
Faculty/student representatives	
Faculty associations	6
Student associations	8
Other	
Government	2
COPSE	2
Total	42

This report provides commentary on how stakeholders perceive COPSE. It is not intended to review in detail how the Council has functioned over the last seven years, or itemize what it has or has not accomplished in that period. As such, this review is impressionistic, representing stakeholders' understanding of how well COPSE has met its goals and activities. During the interviews, no effort was made to challenge, correct, or otherwise address the impressions held by stakeholders.

1.3 Limitations of the review

The review was not to investigate staffing issues, nor was it to consider broader issues in the post-secondary system. Specifically, the review was not to consider:

- ▶ the continued existence of COPSE, the use of an arm's-length agency to manage Manitoba's post-secondary system, and the executive nature of COPSE
- ▶ the size and scope of the post-secondary system
- ▶ the adequacy of funding to the post-secondary system
- ▶ the performance of individual COPSE board members, and the performance of individual COPSE staff members.

Although none of these issues were directly examined as part of this research, stakeholders independently broached some of these topics and, as appropriate, they are discussed in this report.

2.0 Roles and responsibilities of COPSE

Generally, stakeholders have a difficult time evaluating the effectiveness of COPSE in fulfilling its roles and responsibilities. While spelled out in broad terms in its legislation, stakeholders consistently report that the Council has never defined itself in terms of actionable goals. Therefore, there is no clear understanding among stakeholders as to the practical meaning of its mandate or roles as an intermediary or advisor. This issue was identified in 2002 and appears yet to be resolved.

2.1 Mandate

According to the *Council on Post-Secondary Education Act*, the mandate of the Council is:

“to plan and coordinate the development of a post-secondary education system in the province that promotes excellence in and accessibility to education, supports the coordination and integration of services and facilities, and promotes fiscal responsibility.”³

Some stakeholders say COPSE has been effective, but tend to focus on particular areas that do not necessarily relate to planning or coordination, especially at the systemic level. For example, one stakeholder said that COPSE has been effective if one considers its coordinating role in program approval. Another pointed to the establishment of University College of the North as demonstrating the Council’s effectiveness, while several say the Council has provided effective support for their institution or the system as a whole.

Most stakeholders believe that COPSE has been somewhat effective, but also point to particular activities. For example, several stakeholders explicitly stated that COPSE does not play a prominent role in planning or coordinating, but one says it has been somewhat effective in monitoring the system. Others say that the Council has been somewhat effective because it has:

- ▶ advocated and promoted the post-secondary education system
- ▶ promoted the value of the post-secondary education system
- ▶ allocated funds to institutions
- ▶ acted as a buffer between government and institutions

Some stakeholders think COPSE has not been effective in regards to its mandate reporting in that they have seen no evidence that COPSE plans or coordinates the development of the system. They do not believe that COPSE is following any strategic vision, but is simply a body that reacts when the government or post-secondary institutions require it to do so. Indeed, almost all stakeholders note that, as far as they know, COPSE has never articulated a plan for the post-secondary system. To carry out its mandate effectively, stakeholders say that COPSE needs a vision for post-secondary education in the province, and needs to provide a plan as to how this vision is to be achieved. Further, they say that a plan is the prerequisite for effective coordination of the system.

³ The Council on Post-Secondary Education Act, C.C.S.M C. C235, Section 3.1 (COPSE Act).

Almost all stakeholders would welcome and value a plan for the development of the post-secondary education system in the province. As one stakeholder explained, “*A better defined dialogue around the strategic direction of our system is required. The Council needs to provide a greater strategic coordinating role to ensure that our post-secondary system is achieving public policy goals.*” There is some discussion about whether such a vision should come from COPSE or the Department. Some say they prefer the Department to articulate such a vision, and are not “*looking to the Council for this vision because it is at a higher public policy level than the Council has influence in.*”

Even with a clear plan, some doubt that COPSE can fulfill its mandate. These stakeholders say the resources available to COPSE are inadequate to take on such tasks. Others say the Council is limited in the planning or coordination it can do because of the size and independence of the post-secondary education institutions involved. A few see no value in COPSE, even with a clearly defined plan, since the true decision-maker is not the Council, but the government.

Most often, stakeholders said COPSE would be more effective in meeting its mandate if it had a vision or plan. Regardless of what its mandate means in practice, there is a need to set clear expectations so that stakeholders can understand what COPSE is attempting to achieve. This issue was identified in the 2002 review as well, and the Mallea Report recommended “*that COPSE develop a statement of its vision, program and agenda for the development of the PSE system over the next five years of its mandate and circulate it widely*” and that “*Council clarify its role, within the framework provided by the Minister, in the establishment of priorities for the PSE system as a whole.*”⁴ In response, COPSE and Manitoba Advanced Education and Training (as the department was then called) stated “*the Council will develop, in consultation with students, colleges and universities, a strategic planning process for post-secondary education in Manitoba.*”⁵

Neither the recommendations nor the response appears to have resulted in anything tangible stakeholders could point to that allows them to understand the effectiveness and success of the Council in fulfilling its mandate. Given this, it may be assumed that either the Council itself or the government has decided that such a statement is unnecessary or in conflict with other public policy initiatives of the government. That being said, this latter point should not stop the Council from establishing a vision of its role within the system, and should clearly state what its goals are for the next five years, even if they are in the context of its current activities. While there would be a clear advantage to the system to have a vision of its future, even a practical list of goals would at least allow stakeholders to understand the role the Council sees for itself, and thus better judge its effectiveness. Further, establishing goals should not be seen as tying the Council’s hands, since strategic plans are dynamic documents that are subject to revision as circumstances warrant.

⁴ JRM Associates, Ibid.

⁵ Response of the Government of Manitoba, Ibid.

While some stakeholders want an overarching vision for the post-secondary system, others simply want to understand what the Council is trying to achieve and how it expects to accomplish its goals.

RECOMMENDATION

The Council should develop, in consultation with the government and its stakeholders, a vision for the post-secondary education system in Manitoba, a strategic plan that outlines the goals, and an operational plan that demonstrates how these goals will be achieved.

2.1.1 Limitation of mandate

According to the *COPSE Act*, in carrying out its mandate, the Council may not interfere in three areas:

- ▶ The basic right of a university or college to formulate academic policies and standards;
- ▶ The independence of a university or college in fixing standards of admission and of graduation; or
- ▶ The independence of a university or college in the appointment of staff.⁶

Most stakeholders believe the Council has abided by these limitations and has not interfered in the areas specified. A few say that sometimes these boundaries are unclear, but that both COPSE and the institutions work together to reach agreement. Others have concerns, saying that while COPSE has not clearly impinged on these areas, its actions are sometimes not in the spirit of these limitations. For example, some of these stakeholders question the Council's role of funding programs as bordering on interference with institutional rights in terms of both policy and staffing.⁷ A few say specific program reorganizations have, in fact, interfered with the appointment of staff.

2.2 Intermediary role

In carrying out its mandate, the Council shall “act as an intermediary between post-secondary institutions and the government.”⁸ As such, the Council sees itself as an “arm's-length agency”.⁹ Both of these terms suggest that the Council is independent of stakeholders in the system, including government.

Stakeholders have mixed perceptions of how effective the Council has been in playing its role as an intermediary between institutions and government.

⁶ COPSE Act, *Ibid*, Section 3 (2).

⁷ COPSE Act, *Ibid*, Section 14 (2) states that “A university or college that wishes to establish, make significant modifications to, or cease to provide a program of study, service or facility involving money at the disposal of the council shall first obtain the council's written approval.”

⁸ COPSE Act, *Ibid*, section 4a.

⁹ The term “arm's-length” is not used in the Act.

Some stakeholders believe the Council has played its role as intermediary well, and point to positive institutional or systemic outcomes as evidence of this. For the most part, it appears that stakeholders base their assessment of COPSE's effectiveness as an intermediary on how well their requests are fulfilled. Those who have had more of their requests to government fulfilled, or had fewer that did not meet their requirements, appear to have a more positive impression of COPSE's role as an intermediary.

Many other stakeholders do not think COPSE is an effective intermediary. This perspective results from stakeholders not knowing what information the Council relays to the government. Most stakeholders want COPSE to pass on their concerns and arguments unfiltered to government, but are unsure of how COPSE has been actually presenting this information. As one stakeholder explained, *"My single issue is that our submissions to COPSE go into a black hole. They are digested by COPSE and then presented to government. The institutions never know how their case is being made to government."* Since stakeholders have no idea what information the Council is providing government, institutions often feel they need direct access to the Department and Minister to make their case. As another stakeholder explained, *"There is a lack of transparency. Institutions do not know if COPSE is properly representing our interests to government."*

Most others say they cannot judge the effectiveness of COPSE as an intermediary, since they do not know if outcomes are the result of COPSE's role within the government. Stakeholders also report that it is difficult to judge the effectiveness of COPSE's intermediary activities, since they often do not know what COPSE has been trying to achieve.

Many stakeholders questioned whether COPSE is an arm's-length agency, saying that there is little evidence that this is the case. While COPSE is arm's-length in the sense of being outside a government department, stakeholders dispute whether it is arm's-length in terms of being an independent or autonomous agency. Many said they cannot tell if the Council is at arm's-length since its recommendations to government are not made public, and its decisions are made without explanation. Many stakeholders say that rather than being at arm's-length, COPSE is another arm of government. For example, one stakeholder observed that working with COPSE's Secretariat staff is no different than working with staff in the Department of Advanced Education and Literacy.

Several stakeholders complained that, in fact, the arm's-length relationship puts institutions at a disadvantage because they are removed from the true decision-maker—that is, government. As one stakeholder explains, *"The Council only operates at arm's-length in that they are at a distance from the power and the true decision-makers (government), which is a disadvantage."* Some say that being at arm's-length allows COPSE to buffer institutions from government, but others see the Council doing the opposite: buffering the government from the institutions.

There is an assumption among many stakeholders that the Council's role as intermediary should involve advocating the post-secondary education system. Indeed, the Council sees itself as an advocate for the post-secondary education system, but not for any particular institution. However, many stakeholders do not believe COPSE has been a strong or effective advocate. *"An effective Council would provide a convincing case to the Minister as to the fiscal needs of sustaining post-secondary education in Manitoba. This success I measured by the success of our sector at Treasury Board. The Council has not been very effective,"* one stakeholder explains.

Again, while many believe COPSE should play an advocacy role, stakeholders do not know the nature of this advocacy, since they do not believe COPSE has a plan or strategy, and believe it does not make its recommendation to government public.

Seven years ago, the Mallea Report indicated that there was a need for greater transparency in the Council's relationship with government, recommending that "*the Minister and the government routinely seek the advice of COPSE on all matters of public policy affecting the province's system of PSE*" and that the "*reporting relationships between COPSE, the Minister and the government be clarified.*" In response, the "*government will consider whether further clarification of roles/responsibilities is required regarding the relationship between Council and government.*" Given stakeholders' response to our questions, it appears that such clarification is still required.

RECOMMENDATION

The Council should clarify what its role as intermediary means, spelling out to stakeholders exactly what this activity involves, what its limitations are, and what its expectations are of stakeholders and government.

RECOMMENDATION

The Council should consider how to make its role as an intermediary more transparent, including providing stakeholders with a synopsis of its recommendation to government and providing feedback to stakeholders.

2.3 Executive powers

When the *COPSE Act* was created in 1997, concerns were raised at the time over the range of powers given to the Council related to program approval, policy development, accountability, and funding. According to the Act, the council may¹⁰:

- ▶ *review and evaluate post-secondary programs and services and any other related matters;*
- ▶ *in consultation with the universities and colleges, develop policies for specialization and cooperation in the delivery of post-secondary programs and services;*
- ▶ *require a university or college to provide to the council, in the form and within the time period requested by the council, any financial or other information that the council considers necessary;*
- ▶ *recommend to the minister that the government enter into agreements and cooperative arrangements with extra-provincial authorities in order to provide Manitobans with access to post-secondary programs and services not available in the province;*

¹⁰ COPSE Act, *Ibid.*, Section 12.

- ▶ *in consultation with the universities and colleges and with students, establish policies for tuition fees charged by universities and colleges;*
- ▶ *appoint a person or a committee to review and report on any matter concerning a university or college;*
- ▶ *request the auditor of a university or college to provide reports to the council on any matter related to the finances of the university or college;*
- ▶ *request the auditor of a university or college to undertake additional audits or other work in relation to the university or college and to report on that audit or other work to the council.*

As these powers demonstrate, the Council was created as an executive body with significant decision-making powers to manage the post-secondary education system. However, according to stakeholders, the Council has not fully used its powers.

Asked if they believe the powers held by the Council are appropriate, most stakeholders said yes. However, most stakeholders do not understand what those powers are, partly because the Council does not fully exercise them. Some stakeholders recognize this fact, stating that the Council holds more powers than it uses, and that they believe the powers are appropriate only because the Council has restricted their use. Some stakeholders believe the powers of the Council are in conflict with those assigned to their institutions. For example, the Council believes it has the power to deny internally funded programs, but some stakeholders argued that this infringes on the authority of the governing body of universities (i.e., the Senate). Stakeholders from colleges generally felt that the Council holds too much power over their institutions, which may be a carry-over from when colleges were creatures of the government.

Stakeholders are split on whether the Council has exercised these powers effectively; about half say it has, while the other half says it has not. As already stated, some say it has been effective simply because it has not fully used these powers. However, many others provided these responses without fully understanding the nature of the powers the Council has in legislation.

RECOMMENDATION

While the Council has many powers in legislation, it should develop guidelines as to what these powers mean in practice.

2.4 Advisory role concerning the development and delivery

In accordance with the *COPSE Act*, the Council is to play an advisory role to post-secondary institutions in Manitoba on the development and delivery of academic programs, services, and facilities and to the government on post-secondary education and related matters in the province.¹¹

Some stakeholders say the Council has been effective in providing advice, but generally they are referring to information and advice on COPSE-related funding or programs.

About half say the Council has not been effective in carrying out its advisory role concerning development of academic programs, services, and facilities. Indeed, many say the Council does not provide such advice to their institution. Stakeholders report the Council simply approves programs, services, and facilities suggested by institutions. A few are clear that the Council has “*never provided advice on the needs and direction of the province*” and many do not see the Council as a resource for assistance on strategic issues. Institutional stakeholders would not turn to COPSE for advice on the delivery of academic programs because they feel this knowledge is housed within their own institutions. They may turn to COPSE for advice on how to access a program or service funded by COPSE, but this is practical advice from the funder, not system-specific advice.

Other stakeholders say that for COPSE to be an advisor requires a clear vision for the system, but as mentioned, most do not believe such a vision exists, and rather than being proactive, the Council tends to be reactive to issues often identified by institutions. From such a position, stakeholders do not believe the Council is able to provide useful advice on academic programs, services, and facilities and that any development in this area would be related to the development of a clear strategic direction.

2.5 Consultative role

Since the 2002 review, the Council reports having worked to broaden its consultative role with institutional and other post-secondary education stakeholders. For example, the Council reports that it holds annual consultations with the faculty and student groups in addition to the senior administration as part of the Annual Funding meetings. The Council reports that it has also held several meetings with representatives of student groups since 2004.

Almost all of the stakeholders report having had consultations with the Council. However, while there may be more consultations taking place in the past seven years than the Council’s first five years, the perceived value of that consultation is mixed. Most stakeholders told us that they thought these consultations have been somewhat effective, but many others say they have not been effective. Many institutional stakeholders say that their staff often has daily interactions with the Council’s Secretariat and these consultations on practical matters have been useful.

¹¹ The Mallea Report observed that COPSE is “*somewhat unusual in that it has both advisory and executive powers. It serves, at one and the same time, to provide independent advice to the Minister on matters of policy and to allocate resources to the province’s colleges and universities.*” JRM Associates, *Ibid.*

Most stakeholders say they want more and different types of consultation with COPSE. Some would like to see Council Board members more involved in the consultation process. These stakeholders feel the Board is not involved enough, while others say that the valuable consultation comes from working with the staff and not the Board.

Some stakeholders observed that the consultation is more an act of information gathering than true consultation with stakeholders. Institutional stakeholders are asked to provide information, but they receive no feedback on their submissions. Another stakeholder suggested the Council should make presentations to stakeholders “*so that we better understand their role.*” Others suggest consultation requires focusing on a specific issue. For example, there should be “*more consultation in terms of programming and financing. The province is going into a difficult financial time and the institutions need to find a creative way to meet the needs of students and employees.*” Others suggested that more consultation is required between the Council and institutional staff in terms of coordinating research projects. It was also suggested that “*semi-annual meetings with the Council Chair and the Minister to discuss the direction of government would be beneficial.*”

Many non-institutional stakeholders feel they are not consulted as often as they would like. They also expect that such consultations should happen automatically. Currently, they say they are often included in consultation, if they request it. As one stakeholder reported, “*We have ongoing concerns with how limited the consultations have been.*” Like their institutional counterparts, non-institutional stakeholders would like the dialogue to go two ways. As expressed by one stakeholder, “*Our association would appreciate feedback, ongoing meetings, and opportunities for input.*”

Some stakeholders have concerns with the notice they are given to participate in consultations with COPSE, saying that they have been given only a day or two notice to participate. Because of this sort of notice and no option to reschedule, some stakeholders have not been able to participate in consultations and feel that COPSE has not heard their voice.

Some recognize that the limited resources within COPSE may be the barrier that stymies consultation. As a stakeholder states, “*The Council would like to have more engagement with institutions, but is limited by its number of staff. If resources were not limited, the Council would like to do more long-term planning with institutions and would like to operate more proactively.*”

RECOMMENDATION:

If it does not have one, COPSE should work with the stakeholders to develop an annual calendar that establishes the timing of consultation with each stakeholder group. This calendar should be developed well in advance of meetings in order to allow all interested stakeholders the opportunity to arrange their attendance at these meetings.

RECOMMENDATION:

COPSE should provide feedback to stakeholders after consultations, which explains the Council’s understanding of the results of the information and initial reactions to the positions put forward.

3.0 Funding activities

COPSE is involved in a number of activities that require information from stakeholders and result in funds for operations, new programming, and capital replacement.

3.1 Program approval and funding

According to its Act, COPSE is responsible for approving new and expanded academic programming at institutions in consultation with institutional representatives, and other stakeholders, as required. The process involves institutions submitting a statement of intent, a full program proposal, and a complete financial request. After COPSE reviews these submissions, a letter is sent to the institution with COPSE's decision.

Asked what elements of the program approval process are working well and which are not, most stakeholders report that, from a process perspective, programming approval works well overall. Indeed, at least one stakeholder reports the process is *“much less involved as compared to others I have worked with.”*

Others identified the following issues with the programming approval and funding.

- ▶ One of the most common concerns is that institutions receive no feedback on failed submissions; they are simply told the program will not be funded. Stakeholders report that they would like critical feedback on their proposal and why it failed. For example, will the program not be funded because it is not a priority of the government, because it duplicates other services, or because of some deficiency in the proposal? This issue links back to the issues of transparency; stakeholders want information about how and why decisions are made, whether it comes from COPSE or the government.
- ▶ Some stakeholders would like COPSE to provide guidelines not only of how to apply for program funds, but what types of programs COPSE believes are a priority for funding. This would allow institutions to focus on those areas of need, and provide COPSE with a range of proposals from which the Council could choose. However, other stakeholders suggest that COPSE cannot take this approach because it does not have the resources necessary to establish priorities. Further, some stakeholders said that institutions are better positioned than COPSE to understand programming needs.
- ▶ Smaller institutions sometimes feel at a disadvantage because they have limited human resources to prepare programming submissions and thus cannot effectively compete for programming dollars.
- ▶ Some stakeholders say that internally funded programs are beyond COPSE's scope, but that COPSE requires that it be consulted if a program is in any way changed. There appears to be inconsistency in this area. Some stakeholder institutions report that they must check with the Council even when changing the name of a course or program, while other stakeholders report they do not inform COPSE about programming for which COPSE does not directly provide funding.

- ▶ Some stakeholders say COPSE simply approves programs submitted by institutions without any critical analysis of their value or need. These stakeholders would like to see COPSE take a more active role in identifying needs, but also justifying its funding decisions. Again, this goes back to the transparency of decisions that COPSE makes.

Asked how effective the Council has been in assisting their institution in meetings its programming needs, many say it has been very effective. However, this tends to focus on receiving funding or assistance with program proposal preparation. For example, stakeholders told us:

- ▶ *“The Council has given us support, suggestions, and feedback. I do not know what they could do to be more effective.”*
- ▶ *“The Council has always been helpful, supportive, and cooperative.”*
- ▶ *“The Council has been effective in innovative program expansions and providing support to the institutions.”*

Others are less positive about its effectiveness, saying that the Council is simply an approval mechanism and does not provide this type of assistance. As one stakeholder said, *“What they do cannot be construed as assistance.”*

RECOMMENDATION

For purposes of transparency in decision-making, COPSE should clearly articulate the criteria and objectives on which it makes programming decisions.

RECOMMENDATION

The Council should make efforts to explain its programming decisions and, regardless of whether a program is funded or not, should produce clear and demonstrable reasons for why the decision was made.

3.1.1 Achieving a balance among competing priorities

Among the Council’s program-related responsibilities is working with the institutions to balance meeting economic, social, and labour market priorities, and avoiding unnecessary duplication in the post-secondary system. According to the Council, it is also to manage strategic program and system restructuring initiatives with limited funds.

Perceptions among stakeholders are mixed about whether COPSE has been successful in achieving a balance among competing priorities across the post-secondary education system. Again, many of the core issues are the same as mentioned earlier.

- ▶ Many see no evidence that COPSE is actually doing these activities. Some disagreed that balancing priorities is the Council’s responsibility, or if it is, they say the Council has never really demonstrated how they are attempting to balance these priorities. Some

stakeholders say the Council has not been effective, since duplication continues to exist in the system.

- ▶ Many are unable to rate the Council's effectiveness, since program-related decisions are not transparent. As mentioned above, stakeholders said there is no published criteria against which programs are evaluated and the Council does not explain its decisions.

3.2 Annual Funding Plan

Annually, COPSE meets with stakeholders to prepare its funding recommendations to government. This involves requests by COPSE for financial information from each institution, a presentation for and consultation with institutions, and consultations with other stakeholders.

3.2.1 Holding meetings with institutions earlier

For the Annual Funding Plan process, the Council follows the same procedure each year, with its request and review of the operating budget requirements from the institutions. This includes in-person meetings in the fall between the Council and the senior administration, faculty, and student representatives. This year, however, the Council asked the institutions to hold the meetings earlier in the fall to allow more time for preparing budget submissions to the government.

Many stakeholders have concerns about moving up the date of their meeting. However, these concerns depend in part on the information institutions provide. Some see the process as very formal, requiring details and finalized information. Others say that they approach these meetings more informally. As one stakeholder explained, "*The timing of the meeting is not a concern because our institution approaches it with the goal of sharing how we meet our mandate and why our institution is important.*" Thus, some institutions provide mostly financial information from the previous year's budget and spend most of their time explaining how that funding is used effectively. Others take a very different approach, providing detailed estimates of their needs for the following year.

Some were concerned because COPSE is requiring institutions to provide financial information prior to internal approval (by their institution's Board of Governors or Senate). Those who provide detailed information find the process time-consuming and frustrating, while others who focus on communicating their institution's successes and needs tend to see it as more useful because it is a "big picture" discussion.

Given that there are very different approaches, COPSE should be clearer as to the purpose and expectations of the Annual Funding Plan meeting. Still others question the value of these annual meetings: "*The annual meeting does not accomplish a great deal. While the processes are intended to be consultative, they have become traditional and ineffective.*"

Many stakeholders suggested changes to the process.

- ▶ **More feedback and follow-up.** Some would like more feedback on preliminary budget submissions. Another said that a follow-up meeting after the budget would be valuable.
- ▶ **Clarification of requests for information.** One stakeholder said that sometimes COPSE's requests for information are vague and result in unnecessary work on the part of the institutions. Others say COPSE should share its issues and concerns so stakeholders can provide suggestions and assistance.
- ▶ **Greater involvement by Council members.** A few want to see more Council members attend and be engaged in these meetings. As one stakeholder expressed, "*The consultation would be more effective if there was a higher Board member participation rate. If more Board members attended the presentations, they would better understand the 'why' as it comes directly from us, and not interpreted through the Council staff.*"
- ▶ **Need for bilingual consultation.** A few stakeholders want these consultations and any communications from the Council in French.

RECOMMENDATION

COPSE should provide clear guidelines as to the nature of the information requested, how this information will be used, and what their expectations are for the Annual Funding Plan meetings. It should provide institutions with feedback on the results of these meetings.

3.2.2 Summary budgeting

According to COPSE, summary budgeting is a process that will consolidate the reporting of financial operations from all institutions and is expected to be fully implemented in 2009/10. Most institutional stakeholders who provided an opinion say that the Council has provided their senior finance officials with all of the necessary information they need to meet the requirements of summary budgeting. A few say that the requests are a challenge, since year-ends do not match, or that budget numbers themselves are not very realistic.

More generally, a couple of stakeholders would like COPSE to standardize its financial requests, so that COPSE does not make multiple requests in different formats or with different criteria. This is said to be time-consuming, and seemingly without much benefit. Further, some of these requests occur at short notice.

3.2.3 Return to year-to-year funding

For a number of years, the Council advocated for a multi-year funding model for the institutions. Over a three-year period, between 2006/07 and 2008/09, the government implemented a multi-year operating grant funding commitment with the institutions. Under this arrangement, institutions knew the minimum funding increases they would receive three years in advance. However, starting in 2009/10, funding will revert to the traditional annual funding model.

When asked what the implication of the return to a year-to-year budget planning cycle will be, most say it will make planning more difficult and challenging. Almost all stakeholders say that being able to plan three years out with guaranteed public funds is a preferable model, because it allows institutions to make better decisions, to make better use of resources, and to develop plans, especially in terms of staffing. However, some recognize that it is difficult for governments to make long-term commitments and said that few other organizations are assured of increases in government funding across budget years.

3.3 Capital Plan

COPSE reports that the Council Secretariat has played a role in developing a Capital Plan in consultation with the institutions to address deferred maintenance and infrastructure requirements.

Responses among stakeholders were mixed when they were asked how effective the Capital Plan has been in addressing issues of deferred maintenance at their institutions. Some stakeholders were pleased with the funds, saying they were *“helpful in dealing with the most pressing maintenance problems”* and that they *“considerably augmented what we were able to do.”* Others said there were not enough funds available to address their deferred maintenance needs: *“The needs in deferred are so great no matter what allocation method is used, each institution’s most pressing needs will not be addressed.”*

Most institutional stakeholders report that deferred maintenance remains a significant issue at their institutions. Those who say it is not an issue indicated it is because they are housed in newer facilities.

While most did not have an opinion, those who did were divided on their satisfaction in working with Council staff in the capital planning process. Those who reported satisfaction with Council staff in this regard said staff *“probed appropriately, provided suggestions, and were helpful,”* were *“very receptive,”* and were *“doing their best in allocating limited resources.”*

Some feel that the Council was not effective in identifying priorities in deferred maintenance and capital needs. Stakeholders discussed the process, where an outside engineering firm was brought in to prioritize deferred maintenance needs on institutions’ behalf. Many said this process did not take into account the institutions’ perspective, as their needs for deferred maintenance are often affected by programming and other needs, which these engineers did not take into consideration.

One says their institution has not been able to have a *“meaningful conversation”* with the Council staff on the capital planning process, while another says there should be *“more dialogue between institutions and the Council in terms of prioritizing capital issues.”*

3.4 Role of Council in determining tuition fee policy

One of the Council's powers, as stated in the Act, is to engage in consultation with universities and colleges, as well as students, to establish tuition fee policies. Tuition fees were frozen beginning in 2000/01. Shortly following the release of the Levin Report in April 2009, the government announced that it will allow up to a 4.5% increase in university tuition fees and a \$100 increase for college tuition fees for the 2009/10 academic year.¹²

Asked what role they believe the Council should play in determining tuition fee policy, many institutional stakeholders said that the Council (and government) should not have any role in determining tuition fees. Institutions, they said, "*should have the autonomy to set their own fee structures.*" Others allowed that COPSE could play a role to ensure collaboration and harmonization within the system, explaining that "*they should ensure that there is consistency in the fee structures between institutions.*"

Some institutional stakeholders say that the Council has used its role as an intermediary to advocate on their behalf, telling the government that the tuition freeze was unsustainable. Others are not convinced this was the case and have the impression that the "*government's message to institutions is being communicated more strongly by COPSE than institutions' message to government.*"

Some are less sure what role COPSE plays; as one stakeholder states, "*It is unclear who is responsible for setting tuition fees. There should be more transparency and accountability.*" Many others believe that the Council is not playing a role in determining tuition fee policy; rather, it is simply the messenger for the government. Other stakeholders said that while COPSE's role is to make recommendations, it is the government that makes decisions. Another stakeholder states that COPSE has no role in determining tuition fee policy—it is the responsibility of government.

A few stakeholders felt that COPSE had not consulted widely enough in the lifting of the tuition freeze and should not have recommended it.

¹² In July 2008, the government appointed Dr. Ben Levin as Commissioner on Tuition Fees and Accessibility to Post-Secondary Education in Manitoba. The report, released on March 31, 2009, included a literature review and several recommendations related to tuition and accessibility.

4.0 COPSE Board and Secretariat

In this section, we discuss stakeholders' impressions of COPSE's Board and Secretariat.

4.1 COPSE Board

COPSE is a corporate body, comprised of 11 government-appointed members from across the province.¹³ Council members are responsible for approving programs, allocating funding, and providing policy advice to the government. Council members can serve up to two consecutive three-year terms, and meet monthly on a voluntary basis to conduct the business of the Council.

Many stakeholders were not concerned with who sits as Board members, since they believe that these members do not have any influence. While Council members may have powers in legislation, they are perceived as a “*rubber stamp*” for the Secretariat's recommendations. This view is held partly because stakeholders say the issues the members must deal with are complex, and few of the members appear to have extensive knowledge of the post-secondary education system.

Other stakeholders had very little insight into what the function of the Board is, or who currently sits on it. This may indicate that COPSE has not effectively communicated with the stakeholders who make up its Board, or that many stakeholders do not consider the Council members to be important.

Most stakeholders believe the Board members have at least some influence, since stakeholders would like to see a change in the representation of Council members. The suggested changes tended to reflect perceived weaknesses in the current membership.

- ▶ **Regional representation.** A few stakeholders say that the current makeup of Council members under-represents people with knowledge of northern Manitoba, specifically Aboriginal communities. These stakeholders were not necessarily advocating for representation of more Aboriginal members, but for more members with a strong understanding of what they believe are the unique needs in the North. Some believe the Board overrepresents members from Winnipeg. There was also a suggestion that the Council should include more community members.
- ▶ **Stakeholder representation.** Although members do not represent any particular type of post-secondary institution, there was the perception that universities are overrepresented and colleges are under-represented. Others suggested that the Council should include more student representatives. A couple of stakeholders say the Council requires more French-speaking representatives.
- ▶ **Skills.** Several said representatives should have more knowledge about or experience in post-secondary education, and that membership should include post-secondary experts.

¹³ The current Chair of the Council is James Allum; Vice-Chair is Maureen Brown. Names and biographies of all Council members are posted on the Council's website (www.copse.mb.ca).

One suggested that the Council is in need of members with a financial background, since many of the requests that go through the Board are financial in nature.

Some stakeholders say that government should not solely be appointing members, but that institutions should nominate Council members.

As mentioned, many stakeholders recommended that Board members be more engaged and involved in the process. Stakeholders report that Council members often do not attend the Annual Funding Plan meetings. Stakeholders wonder how members can make decisions on funding if they are not at these meetings.

RECOMMENDATION

Council members should be involved more fully in consultations with stakeholders.

4.2 COPSE Secretariat

The Council is supported by a staff Secretariat of 13 provincial civil servants. Staff undertake projects and activities designed to meet the Council's goals and mandate, and support the Council in developing policy and financial accountability in consultation with the institutions.

Most stakeholders are satisfied (if only somewhat) with the communication and responsiveness of the Council staff. Stakeholders described Council staff as very supportive, helpful, efficient, empathetic, and responsible. Generally, stakeholders report having a good working relationship with COPSE staff. Indeed, stakeholders are generally *“very impressed by the willingness, the point of view, and the background knowledge of the people we deal with.”*

However, a few note areas in need of improvement, such as timeliness (*“requests are not always fulfilled”*) and knowledge (*“staff are not as knowledgeable as they should be about the college sector”*).

5.0 Initiatives and policy-making

COPSE says the work of the Council revolves around its goals and strategic plan, which are closely aligned with that of the Manitoba Department of Advanced Education and Literacy. The Council reports being engaged with the institutions in several ongoing policy initiatives, including those for Aboriginal learners, distance education, and prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR).

5.1 COPSE's initiatives

Below, we discuss stakeholders' impressions of some of the areas in which COPSE has attempted to make an impact.

5.1.1 Aboriginal learners

The Council reports that a high priority for COPSE has been improving accessibility and providing support for Aboriginal learners. This includes things such as the ACCESS programs, expansion of regional centres in the North, participating in consultations for the Bear Spirit Report, as well as specific programming initiatives.¹⁴

Most stakeholders say COPSE has been supportive of initiatives for Aboriginal learners. However, many say that COPSE has been playing a reactive, rather than a proactive, role. Again, it appears that because COPSE has no plan (or at least not one it has shared with stakeholders) on how to address the Aboriginal learners, stakeholders assume that the Council is reacting in a piecemeal fashion.

Another issue is that many stakeholders believe COPSE has only been successful in this area by funding programs for Aboriginal learners. They do not believe COPSE has provided direction, but simply has been the mechanism to acquire the funds for institutions to put these programs in place.

Several stakeholders made suggestions about how to better serve Aboriginal learners, including: the need to develop literacy initiatives; adapting the bursary system to meet Aboriginal needs; facilitating continuity between secondary and post-secondary; more supportive structure at post-secondary institutions; and generally that there are not enough new programs for Aboriginals. Another stakeholder, although recognizing this is likely outside the scope of COPSE, said the largest challenge is getting Aboriginal students to complete high school.

¹⁴ The final report, "*The Consultation on Improving Post-Secondary Outcomes for First Nations and Métis Students in Southern Manitoba*," was prepared by Bear Spirit Consulting and released in May 2007.

5.1.2 Distance education

The Council reports that it has worked closely with Campus Manitoba staff and institutional representatives on the Post-Secondary Education Committee on Learning Technology (PSECLT) to improve access to distance delivery education throughout the province. The Council also directed an external review of Campus Manitoba in 2007/08, in which institutional representatives were consulted.¹⁵

Most stakeholders believe the Council has worked effectively with institutions in the support and expansion of distance education. Similar to initiatives for Aboriginal learners, most say the Council has been simply a funder. As one stakeholder observed, COPSE has “*provided funds, but are not advocates for it.*” Others say that it has been “*helpful, but not inspiring*” and another says it “*provided support, but it is the institutions that have led the way.*” Some non-institutional stakeholders feel that not all stakeholders were consulted on distance education (e.g., students).

Most believe there are further distance delivery initiatives that the Council could play an active role in or pursue. The most common role is to develop a plan; as one stakeholder says, “*COPSE should identify the province’s distance delivery needs and then put a plan in place to have them met.*”

5.1.3 Prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR)

The Council provides funding for PLAR Coordinators at the institutions, works with PLAR consultants in government and across the province, and supports initiatives such as the Manitoba Prior Learning Assessment Network (MPLAN).

Most stakeholders report being satisfied with the Council’s role, saying that they are “*getting adequate support*” or that “*levels of funding...meet our current needs.*” Indeed, one says that PLAR is “*one of COPSE’s victories.*” Some say more support for PLAR for Aboriginal learners is needed.

Most said COPSE should not be playing a greater role in PLAR other than funding, and that PLAR should be the responsibility of the institutions.

¹⁵ A final report on the external review of Campus Manitoba was released in spring 2008 and was shared with the PSECLT and government representatives.

5.1.4 Credit transfer

In keeping with its legislative mandate to “*facilitate the implementation of appropriate credit transfer arrangements between universities and colleges*”¹⁶, COPSE reports that credit transfer and articulation arrangements remain a high priority for the Council. COPSE also acknowledges that much work has already been done by the institutions themselves to develop credit transfer agreements with other institutions both here in Manitoba and around the world.

Generally, stakeholders feel more should be done in the area of credit transfer, but many are unsure what COPSE can do in this regard. Some say the Act does not give the Council authority over credit transfer, while others say the Council’s role should be that of a facilitator getting parties moving in the right direction. These stakeholders argue that COPSE is the “*only entity which is able to lead on a province-wide transfer program.*” However, most believe that the Council does not have the resources (either in terms of staff or money) to undertake and maintain a credit transfer system.

Almost all would agree, however, that work needs to continue in this area and that a credit transfer system would benefit both students and the system as a whole.

RECOMMENDATION

COPSE should continue its effort to encourage dialogue among post-secondary institutions in Manitoba about the creation of a province-wide credit transfer system.

5.1.5 Quality assurance

In recent years, governments, institutions, and other stakeholders in Canada and elsewhere have been increasingly active in the area of quality assurance (QA) in post-secondary education. QA in this context refers to the criteria and processes employed in reviews of institutions and/or programs, whether internal or external, to determine whether standards set for curriculum, inputs, and outcomes are being met and maintained.

According to the Council, Manitoba enjoys the benefit of having a well-established public post-secondary system that works to ensure high-quality programming. COPSE believes its program approval process is complementary to the system. However, Manitoba remains one of only three provinces that do not have a formal QA system.¹⁷ In view of this, and in keeping with its mandate to promote excellence in the system, the Council is exploring ways to build upon current successful practices and to develop a fuller, more standardized QA process.

Stakeholders had a very mixed reaction to the need for and the role of COPSE in developing a process of quality assurance. Some institutional stakeholders felt that QA already exists through the accreditation process. Others say Manitoba is far behind other jurisdictions in terms of quality assurance, and that a QA process would help COPSE in meeting its mandate. Some see any COPSE involvement as a breach of the institutions’ independence, while others partially

¹⁶ COPSE Act, *Ibid.*, Section 11f.

¹⁷ The other two provinces are Saskatchewan and Newfoundland and Labrador.

agree, saying that COPSE could play a more central role, but must do so without infringing on institutions' autonomy.

Others suggest that COPSE should first work with the institutions to see if the current processes and policies meet the national standards. Some point out that while moving to an accreditation role at the provincial level is appropriate, it could not be developed or carried out by a small agency such as COPSE. Another observes that while COPSE may have a role in the design and implementation, it should not run the QA process.

RECOMMENDATION

COPSE should continue exploring ways to build upon current practices and, in particular, encourage dialogue among post-secondary institutions about the development of a standardized Quality Assurance process that meets the needs of the province.

5.2 Part of a system

In accordance with its mandate, the Council is expected to plan and coordinate development of a post-secondary education system that promotes accessibility, supports coordination and integration of services and facilities, and promotes fiscal responsibility. One of the findings from the Mallea Report in 2002 was that *“while there may be a growing acceptance of the idea among the institutions that they form a collectivity of sorts, they do not perceive themselves as integral parts of a system of post-secondary education.”*¹⁸

Asked if their institution is more of an independent entity, or part of a coordinated post-secondary education system, most stakeholders said they are independent, but also part of a coordinated system. As one explained, while each institution is independent in meeting different needs of different Manitobans, *“together the needs of Manitobans as a whole are well met.”* Another stakeholder observed that *“ideally, we are autonomous institutions that are part of a coordinated system.”* Another said that while institutional independence remained important, it is in the context of a coordinated system. *“Our institution will fight for our independence as we continue to work towards a coordinated system.”*

Asked what role COPSE has played in engendering a cohesive and coordinated post-secondary education system in Manitoba, stakeholders said their general impression is that the Council has done little in this regard. Stakeholders say that to achieve this goal, the Council would need a plan or a vision that would guide them. As mentioned previously, from stakeholders' perspective, COPSE has no plan.

Without a clear plan, COPSE is simply playing an auxiliary role. As one stakeholder says, *“The Council has provided a monitoring function. It has not done a great deal of coordinating.”* Others add that a plan alone probably would not be enough. Coordination now is often tactical rather than strategic, simply because of the size of the system and the resources available. COPSE does not have the resources to do anything as complex as coordinate the system. It could, however, play a coordinating role in managing duplication of programming—something it is attempting to do currently. Even if it had the resources, several stakeholders questioned how

¹⁸ JRM Associates, Ibid.

much influence it could bring, since too much coordination would infringe on the independence of the institutions.

5.3 COPSE and AEL's responsibilities

The Council was created in 1997, before the Department of Advanced Education and Literacy (AEL) was established in 2001. The Council currently functions as a provincial government agency within AEL. Given this fact, it is perhaps not surprising that most stakeholders think the areas of responsibility of both COPSE and AEL overlap.

Some stakeholders said the Department and Council work well together and are in harmony. These stakeholders report that there is “*good coordination between the Council and AEL*” and that “*while the Council works at arm's-length, it is still very dependent on the Department.*”

Most stakeholders had the exact opposite impression, saying they are confused about the boundaries between COPSE and AEL. Indeed, some also say that while they overlap, they are not always in harmony. As one stakeholder said, “*There is not good coordination between the Council and AEL.*” This sometimes results in mixed messages, as one stakeholder noted, “*The Council and the Department do not always communicate the same message.*” And some have the impression that the Council has had difficulty working with the Department.

5.4 Accountability

The Council reports that it also assumes responsibility in cooperation with the institutions for meeting accountability requirements in the areas of research and reporting. For example, the Council reports that it has worked closely with institutional representatives for many years to develop performance indicators and a program costing methodology.

The Council publishes an Annual Report of its projects and activities, including audited financial statements, and the Statistical Compendium on CD-ROM (included with the Annual Report) with five-year data on enrolments, graduates, retention rates, programs, staffing, etc.

Most stakeholders report that they do not review the Council's Annual Report, but many rely heavily on the Statistical Compendium. This is particularly true of institutional vice-presidents and student associations. Some users made suggestions on how to improve the compendium. Stakeholders suggested that it should:

- ▶ Include a long-term plan for or vision of the future of post-secondary education system in Manitoba.
- ▶ Include information that is standardized across institutions.
- ▶ Include analysis of information to help institutions understand what the data means.
- ▶ Be produced semi-annually.
- ▶ Be distributed more widely by COPSE; for example, to institutions' Board of Governors.

5.5 Survey research

In the last few years, COPSE has coordinated two survey research projects with the institutions: the Survey of Early Leavers in 2007 and the Manitoba Graduate Outcomes Survey in 2008.

Almost all of those asked said the Council should continue to be involved in survey research projects. Stakeholders said that such projects help give direction to institutions, government, COPSE, and the system as a whole. However, some stakeholders say that conducting the research is not enough, and that the Council should take action based on the findings of the research. Others suggest that the results should be brought to the attention of government so that issues identified in the research can be addressed.

Many suggested topics for further research on:

- ▶ Student issues, such as student retention, student trends, low participant rates, graduate students, newcomer integration, international recruitment, declining enrolment rates among men, why students chose to study outside of the province, and Aboriginal students.
- ▶ Staff issues, such as employee satisfaction and faculty retention.
- ▶ Programming issues, such as new programming and whether it is meeting students' needs and the credit transfer program.
- ▶ International student tuition fees.
- ▶ Labour market needs.

RECOMMENDATION

COPSE should continue to coordinate survey research while working with stakeholders to identify topics of importance.

6.0 Final comments

As a summary exercise, we asked stakeholders to identify the Council's strengths and challenges.

6.1 Enduring strengths

Most stakeholders could identify something they would consider an enduring strength of COPSE.

- ▶ **Staff.** The most common strength, as identified by stakeholders, is Council staff. The members of the Secretariat were described by these stakeholders as *“knowledgeable, accessible, and open,”* and *“very effective.”*
- ▶ **Financial support.** Many say the Council's enduring strength has been financial. While some say the only value is the fact that it distributes money in the system, others say it is that the Council *“has been successful in maintaining post-secondary education as a government priority”* and that *“there is more money in the post-secondary system than there would be if COPSE ceased to exist.”* Another stakeholder says COPSE has *“been able to grow the post-secondary sector in the province.”* Multi-year funding was also identified as one of COPSE's great successes.
- ▶ **Intermediary.** Several stakeholders explained that COPSE's enduring strength is the fact that it has provided a buffer between the system and the government, along with its ability to *“act as a bridge between institutions and the government.”* It has been able to do this because it has worked at developing relationships with institutions and listens to their concerns. As one stakeholder explains, its *“good relationship and communications with institutions has allowed the Council to be an effective conduit.”*
- ▶ **Consultation.** A few say that COPSE has made the effort to understand the issues by consulting with the institutions, and therefore, *“they understand the issues, take the ones that are critical to us, and advocate on our behalf.”*
- ▶ **Advice.** Another stakeholder says that COPSE's enduring strength is the fact that the institutions are *“getting support and advice from the staff on how to proceed with initiatives and ideas that will not be contradictory to other institutions, and be acceptable to the government.”*
- ▶ **Cooperation.** As one stakeholder explained, the Council's strength is in its *“ability to get the universities and colleges to cooperate together on issues of common concern.”*
- ▶ **Programs.** Several participants reported that particular initiatives or programs were the Council's enduring strength. These include college expansion, University College of the North, the Access program, and *“concern for Aboriginal learners”* in general.

A number of stakeholders say that the strength of COPSE is its potential. These stakeholders believe that COPSE has had some small accomplishments in the last 12 years, but its real potential is in the future if it develops a long-term vision and priorities for Manitoba's post-secondary education system.

A few say that the Council has no enduring strengths, including those who said it does not add any value to the system. Among this group, some feel it is because the Council has no real power, while one says it is not possible to judge the strength of this organization because they do not know what it has accomplished "*due to a lack of transparency.*"

6.2 Challenges

The challenges stakeholders identified include funding, staffing, strategic and long-term planning, and the changing provincial demographics that will see a reduction of young people coming into the system.

- ▶ **Relevance.** Several stakeholders say that the challenge facing the Council is its relevance in the system. Indeed, stakeholders said that the problems identified in the first review still exist, and they question the value the Council adds to the system. Several stakeholders questioned the value of this review, given the fact that, from their perspective, very few of the issues identified in the 2002 review have been addressed. Thus, the challenge remains for the Council to demonstrate that it has a valuable role, and to do this it must have a plan and define a strategy to accomplish it. Another stakeholder is concerned that the Council has an unclear mandate without real powers, and therefore has been unable to become relevant in the system: "*It is difficult for the Council to effect change in post-secondary education because the Council does not have a clear mandate or true powers.*" Although this review was not to consider the existence of COPSE, several stakeholders argued that the fundamental question is: Does Manitoba need such a body, given the size of our post-secondary system?
- ▶ **Lack of transparency.** Several stakeholders reiterated the common theme that COPSE does not have the mechanism in place that allows those outside of the Council to understand how it makes decisions: "*The institutions understand that there is limited funding and program resources. The Council's integrity would improve if they were more transparent in terms of their decision-making.*" This is a theme reiterated by stakeholders at many levels within institutions, as well as faculty and student representatives.
- ▶ **Funding.** Several stakeholders say the challenge for the Council is the shortage of financial resources in the system. A system that already is suffering financially was further damaged by the recession. Some stakeholders say the Council will face the challenge of allocating limited funding to meet diverse and often competing needs. Some say it will also face the challenge of needing to be an even stronger advocate on behalf of the post-secondary system to a government that will have even fewer resources.

- ▶ **Resources.** Several stakeholders identified the resources available to COPSE as its most significant challenge. These stakeholders say the Council is under-resourced and has difficulty recruiting and retaining staff because they are overworked. As well, because of a lack of resources, staff need to concentrate on day-to-day operations and do not have the time to address their mandate of planning for the system.
- ▶ **Changing demographics.** Many say that one of the biggest challenges for the post-secondary system as a whole, and thus for COPSE, is the changing demographics in the province that will result in declining enrolment. This will also result in funding issues, as well as difficult decisions about how to divide limited resources between colleges and universities.
- ▶ **Clear guidelines.** One stakeholder suggested that a clearer interpretation of legislation is required—in particular, when institutions are required to seek the Council’s approval.
- ▶ **Council Board members.** One stakeholder identified the biggest challenge as Council Board members, who, it is argued, need to have a much greater understanding of the post-secondary system.
- ▶ **Other areas.** Several stakeholders identified other challenges that the Council will face, including Aboriginal learners (not only getting them into post-secondary education, but ensuring their success), improving graduate-level research, and improving their consultations with stakeholder groups.

6.3 Other issues

When invited to do so, some stakeholders made other comments about COPSE.

- ▶ **Cooperation.** One stakeholder suggested that post-secondary institutions should be encouraged to cooperate to reduce costs, including everything from bulk buying arrangements to sharing other resources. As this stakeholder said, “*The Council could coordinate common sharing between universities. This would allow for cost savings and better programming in Manitoba.*”
- ▶ **Focus on other areas.** Several stakeholders want the Council to focus on areas that they feel have been neglected in the post-secondary education system. For example, the Council should have an “*increased focus on graduate students.*” Another stakeholder wants the Council to make an “*explicit commitment to*” and plan for university-level research. A stakeholder relayed that the post-secondary education system is affected by both the primary and secondary education systems, and that the Council should be examining trends in these areas: “*While this may be outside the mandate of COPSE, more acknowledgement and discussions of what is happening at every level of education and how this is going to affect post-secondary in the future will help Manitoba post-secondary education.*”

- ▶ **Monitoring.** Another reiterated a concern that some mechanism should be in place to monitor institutions to ensure they are spending funds appropriately: “*The Council should oversee institutions to ensure that the allocated funds are being used properly.*”
- ▶ **Student aid.** Expanding the Council’s role to include issues of student aid was seen as prudent, given this is an integral part of the post-secondary education system. It would allow the Council to demonstrate a more complete understanding of the system if it were allowed to make recommendations on student aid.

7.0 Conclusion

This review of the Council on Post-Secondary Education was established with several objectives.

In terms of making progress since the last review in 2002, several stakeholders commented that little has changed. However, many stakeholders point out that COPSE has continued to play a role in Manitoba's post-secondary education system by providing funding to institutions, as well as having developed some new initiatives. In addition, COPSE has consulted more widely and regularly than it did prior to 2002. However, from the perspective of stakeholders, the fundamental concerns outlined in the Mallea Report have not been addressed. Indeed, many of the recommendations from the current review are similar to those made seven years earlier.

Most of these concerns revolve around COPSE's effectiveness in carrying out its mandate and program approval and funding processes. As mentioned, many of these concerns identified seven years ago persist in these areas today. In terms of its legislated mandate, stakeholders do not believe COPSE is doing any planning or coordinating in the post-secondary education system. Most stakeholders said they have never seen a plan from COPSE, which makes it difficult for them to gauge COPSE's effectiveness, since they have nothing against which to measure.

For program approval and funding processes, most stakeholders have concerns because of a perceived lack of transparency of COPSE's processes. They do not know what COPSE recommends or why particular decisions are made. While most stakeholders report positive relationships with COPSE staff on a day-to-day basis, many also remain concerned, or at least cautious, about the role of the organization due to the issues identified above.

Stakeholders are fairly positive about COPSE's initiatives for Aboriginal learners, distance education, PLAR, and deferred capital maintenance, but COPSE is mostly seen simply as a funder. Stakeholders say the Council has not presented a clear plan for how these activities achieve certain goals. As such, the Council is perceived as reactive, and not seen as leading on these issues.

Most stakeholders say that COPSE's overall impact on the post-secondary education system has been marginal. Some believe the system is better off than it would otherwise be without the Council. Others say it has minimal impact, and has in fact blunted the effectiveness of institutions in making their case to government.

It appears that many of the issues raised by stakeholders can be addressed by two broad actions. Given that the Council is the chosen mechanism by government to oversee aspects of the post-secondary education system, COPSE needs to develop a plan for the system that clearly outlines a vision, goals, and its role. While roles and responsibilities are identified in the legislation, these appear to be far more expansive than what COPSE is actually doing. Thus, it would be useful for COPSE to explicitly identify its role and responsibilities within the system to reflect what it currently does and plans to do over five years, given its resources. Both this statement and a strategic plan do not mean that COPSE cannot remain flexible, addressing issues as they arise. However, it does provide stakeholders guidance as to what they can expect from COPSE. The goals COPSE establishes can be modest or grand, but they should be the basis for any future review of the Council. These goals will be a more appropriate measure against which stakeholders could evaluate the effectiveness of COPSE.

The second action is for COPSE to be more transparent. This builds on the action above, since to be transparent, an organization needs to be clear about what it does. Transparency requires COPSE to clarify its role as intermediary between the institutions and government, and as advisor to both institutions and government. It means defining its powers, duties, role, and responsibilities in practical terms. Transparency also suggests providing stakeholders with a summary of what COPSE recommends to government and why, providing feedback to stakeholders on consultations and information they supply, and developing clearer criteria against which applications and proposals will be evaluated.

RECOMMENDATION

For any future reviews, COPSE's progress should be evaluated against specific goals and outcomes that it has outlined in a strategic plan, even if the plan does not directly align with its mandate and legislated roles.

7.1 Recommendations

Below we reiterate all recommendations in the order in which they were made in this report:

RECOMMENDATION 1: The Council should develop, in consultation with the government and its stakeholders, a vision for the post-secondary education system in Manitoba, a strategic plan that outlines the goals, and an operational plan that demonstrates how these goals will be achieved.

RECOMMENDATION 2: The Council should clarify what its role as intermediary means, spelling out to stakeholders exactly what this activity involves, what its limitations are, and what its expectations are of stakeholders and government.

RECOMMENDATION 3: The Council should consider how to make its role as an intermediary more transparent, including providing stakeholders with a synopsis of its recommendation to government and providing feedback to stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATION 4: While the Council has many powers in legislation, it should develop guidelines as to what these powers mean in practice.

RECOMMENDATION 5: If it does not have one, COPSE should work with the stakeholders to develop an annual calendar that establishes the timing of consultation with each stakeholder group. This calendar should be developed well in advance of meetings in order to allow all interested stakeholders the opportunity to arrange their attendance at these meetings.

RECOMMENDATION 6: COPSE should provide feedback to stakeholders after consultations, which explains the Council's understanding of the results of the information and initial reactions to the positions put forward.

RECOMMENDATION 7: For purposes of transparency in decision-making, COPSE should clearly articulate the criteria and objectives on which it makes programming decisions.

RECOMMENDATION 8: The Council should make efforts to explain its programming decisions and, regardless of whether a program is funded or not, should produce clear and demonstrable reasons for why the decision was made.

RECOMMENDATION 9: COPSE should provide clear guidelines as to the nature of the information requested, how this information will be used, and what their expectations are for the Annual Funding Plan meetings. It should provide institutions with feedback on the results of these meetings.

RECOMMENDATION 10: Council members should be involved more fully in consultations with stakeholders

RECOMMENDATION 11: COPSE should continue its effort to encourage dialogue among post-secondary institutions in Manitoba about the creation of a province-wide credit transfer system.

RECOMMENDATION 12: COPSE should continue exploring ways to build upon current practices and, in particular, encourage dialogue among post-secondary institutions about the development of a standardized Quality Assurance process that meets the needs of the province

RECOMMENDATION 13: COPSE should continue to coordinate survey research while working with stakeholders to identify topics of importance.

RECOMMENDATION 14: For any future reviews, COPSE's progress should be evaluated against specific goals and outcomes that it has outlined in a strategic plan, even if the plan does not directly align with its mandate and legislated roles.

Appendix A

Interview Guide

OPERATIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL REVIEW OF COPSE INTERVIEW GUIDE

In accordance with the Council's legislation, an organizational and operational review of the Council on Post-Secondary Education (COPSE) shall be undertaken to review its performance in its management role of Manitoba's post-secondary education for the seven years from 2002-03 to 2008-09.

The topics covered in this interview are primarily those related to the COPSE Act, mandate, duties and powers of the Council. The interview will take up to one hour and we will be audio-recording it for quality purposes. Your comments will be used to help review COPSE's performance and you will not be identified in any way in our report. Your comments are protected under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA)* and all audio-recordings will be destroyed at the end of this research.

In the interview, we will be covering several topics pertaining to the Council. Your opinions are very important to the Council Review. The Council appreciates your participation in the interview and is interested in hearing your views. If there are some questions you feel you don't know or cannot answer, or may not be relevant to you, that's fine, we can skip that section and move on to the next. Please be as detailed as possible in your responses.

If you have any concerns or questions about the Review, these should be directed to Sid Rogers, Council Secretary (945-1840 or sid.rogers@gov.mb.ca), or Kim Browning, Project Leader for the Council Review (945-0746 or kim.browning@gov.mb.ca).

MANDATE AND ROLE OF THE COUNCIL

1. In your opinion, how effective the Council been effective in carrying out its mandate to plan and coordinate the development of the post-secondary education system in the province?

Effective Somewhat Not effective

Please explain.

2. How can the Council be more effective in meeting its mandate?

According to the *COPSE Act*, in carrying out its mandate, there are three areas the Council may not interfere with. (This is cited as a Limitation in the Act).

- a) The basic right of a university or college to formulate academic policies and standards;
- b) The independence of a university or college to formulate academic policies and standards; or
- c) The independence of a university or college in the appointment of staff.

3. Has the Council successfully followed its mandate by not interfering in three areas specified in its Limitation?

Yes No

Do you have concerns about the Council's interference in any of these areas?

Yes No

If so, what concerns do you have?

4. In your opinion, how effective has the Council played its role as an intermediary between the institutions and the government?

Effective Somewhat Not effective

What examples would you point to as examples?

EXECUTIVE POWERS OF THE COUNCIL

5. Do you believe that the powers held by the Council are appropriate?

Yes No

6. In your opinion, has the Council exercised its powers effectively?

Yes No

Please explain.

ADVISORY ROLE OF THE COUNCIL

7. From your institution's perspective, how effective has the Council been in carrying out its advisory role concerning development and delivery of academic programs, services and facilities?

Effective Somewhat Not effective

Please explain.

CONSULTATIVE ROLE OF THE COUNCIL

8. Have you or your stakeholder group held consultation(s) with the Council?

Yes No

If yes, how effective has the Council been in consulting with your stakeholder group?

Effective Somewhat Not effective

Should there be more or a different type of consultations with the Council?

Yes No

Please explain.

9. Are there other ways that the Council can or should play a greater consultative role not only with your stakeholder group, but with the post-secondary system in general?

Yes No

Please explain.

PROGRAMMING

10. What elements of the program approval process are working well?

What elements require greater clarity?

11. Thinking about your institution's programming requests for approval over the last seven years, how effective has the Council been effective in assisting your institution in meeting its programming needs?

Effective Somewhat Not effective

In what areas, if any, could the Council be more effective?

12. In your opinion, how successful has the Council been in achieving a balance among these competing priorities across the post-secondary education system?

Successful Somewhat Not successful

Please explain.

FUNDING

13. Do you have any general concerns about moving up the timing of the Council's meetings with the institutions?

Yes No

14. Are there other changes you would like to see the Council make to the Annual Funding Plan process in general? [INTERVIEWER NOTE: If necessary, please remind interviewee(s) that response is to be based on the funding process, not the adequacy of funding]

Yes No

[Note: questions 13 & 14 may only be appropriate to ask Senior Administration only, i.e., President and VP Financial]

15. Has the Council provided senior finance officials at your institution with all the necessary information they need to meet the requirements for Summary Budgeting?

Yes No

In what ways can the Council be of more assistance?

16. Have senior finance officials experienced any difficulties with preparing the required information for the Council?

Yes No

If yes, please explain.

17. Do you foresee any difficulties or challenges with the return to a year-to-year budget planning cycle in comparison with the multi-year funding model?

Yes No

Please explain.

18. Notwithstanding the infusion of shared funding from the federal Knowledge Infrastructure Program, the provincial government and private donors over the recent past, how effective has the Capital Plan been in addressing issues of deferred maintenance at your institution?

Effective Somewhat Not effective

19. To what extent does deferred maintenance remain a significant issue at your institution?

Significant issue Somewhat Not an issue

20. If applicable, how satisfied are you with you or your institution's working relationship with Council staff in the capital planning process?

Satisfied Somewhat Not satisfied

Please explain.

21. What role do you believe the Council should play in determining tuition fee policy?

22. How do you think your institution, and Manitoba's post-secondary system in general will be affected by the economic recession in a few years time? Please explain.

COPSE BOARD AND SECRETARIAT

23. Are there any changes that you would like to see to the representation (the number and/or composition) of the Council members?

Yes No

24. What, if any changes would you like to see to the roles or responsibilities of the Council members in relation to your institution, or to the post-secondary system in general? For example, should the Council as a whole play a larger or more active role in relation to your institution or to the post-secondary system in general?

25. Have you had communications and interactions with Council staff?

Yes No

If yes, what types of communications or interactions you have or have had with the Council staff.

26. How satisfied have you been with the communications and responsiveness of the Council staff in addressing your issues or responding to requests for information?

Satisfied Somewhat Not satisfied

37. How do you perceive the areas of responsibility of both COPSE and AEL? Do you believe COPSE and AEL carry out their responsibilities independent of one another, are they in harmony, or do they sometimes overlap?

Independent Harmony Overlap

Please explain.

ACCOUNTABILITY

38. Do you consult or review the Council's Annual Report and Statistical Compendium on a regular basis?

39. Yes No

If so, do you find them informative?

40. Do you have any comments or suggestions for changes to make to these reporting documents? Please explain.

Yes No

41. Should the Council continue to be involved in survey research projects involving the institutions?

Yes No

42. Do you have suggestions for other areas of research or further survey research projects that the Council should pursue?

REPORTING AND WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

43. Do you have any comments, concerns or issues about the Council Chair's dual-reporting relationship to both the Council and the Government? Please explain.

Yes No

44. Do you have any comments, concerns or issues about the Council Secretary's reporting relationship to the Council Chair and the working relationship with Government? Please explain.

Yes No

STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES AND FINAL COMMENTS

45. Taking the last seven years into consideration, from your perspective, what are the most enduring strengths of the Council? Please explain.
46. What are the current and future challenges facing the Council? Please explain.
47. Are there other areas that we haven't covered that you would like to see Council play a role in? Please explain.
48. Finally, are there any other comments you would like to make about the Council in general, or in relation to your institution, or your stakeholder group? Please explain.

That brings us to the end of the interview. On behalf of the Council, thank you very much for sharing your thoughts and opinions for the Council Review. Your time and participation are greatly appreciated.

Appendix B

Documents sent to stakeholders



July 2009

RE: Review of the Council on Post-Secondary Education

Dear _____:

The purpose of this letter is to request your participation in the Operational and Organizational Review of the Council on Post-Secondary Education (COPSE). In accordance with the Council's legislation, COPSE's performance in its management role of Manitoba's post-secondary education between 2002/03 and 2008/09 is being reviewed.

COPSE has engaged Prairie Research Associates (PRA), an independent research firm, to conduct this consultation with institution stakeholders. The conversational interview is intended to take about an hour and covers topics that relate directly to the *COPSE Act*, namely the mandate, duties, and powers of the Council.

The main objectives of the Review are to:

- ▶ consider progress made since the previous review
- ▶ gather new information on initiatives undertaken
- ▶ examine the continued effectiveness and performance of COPSE as a corporate body

The Final Report will be provided to the Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy and to COPSE. It is expected that the Final Report will also be available on the COPSE website in early 2010.

A representative from PRA will contact you in the near future to set up a convenient time for an interview. The information you provide will not be linked to you or your institution, rather, PRA will present the report findings in aggregate form.

To assist in the interview process, we have enclosed a brief overview of the Review that includes some background information and a list of the general themes to be covered in the interview. If you have any immediate questions about this research, please contact me at 987-2030 (in Winnipeg) or at 1-888-877-6744 (outside of Winnipeg).

If you have any concerns or questions about the Review itself, please contact Sid Rogers, Council Secretary at 945-1840 or Kim Browning, Project Leader for the Council Review at 945-0746.

In advance, thank you for your participation.

Yours truly,

Kerry Dangerfield
Partner

OPERATIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL REVIEW OF COPSE GENERAL INFORMATION

1.0 Overview

In accordance with Council on Post-Secondary Education (COPSE) legislation, an organizational and operational review of the Council will be undertaken to consider its performance in its management role of Manitoba's post-secondary education for the seven years from 2002/03 to 2008/09.

The major objectives of the Review are to consider progress made since the first five-year review (1997–2002); to gather new information on initiatives undertaken; and to examine the continued effectiveness and performance of COPSE as a corporate body. More specifically, the Review will:

- ▶ incorporate the survey results and Government response to the 1997–2002 organizational and operational review
- ▶ determine the ongoing effectiveness of COPSE in carrying out its mandate, program approval, funding processes, and relations with stakeholders
- ▶ obtain opinions on initiatives undertaken by COPSE in the current review period
- ▶ measure the overall impact of COPSE on the post-secondary system

The Review will not investigate staffing issues or consider broader issues in the post-secondary system. Specifically, the Review will exclude consideration of:

- ▶ the continued existence of COPSE, the use of an arm's length agency to manage Manitoba's post-secondary system, and the executive nature of COPSE
- ▶ the size and scope of the post-secondary system
- ▶ the adequacy of funding to the post-secondary system
- ▶ the performance of individual COPSE board and staff members

2.0 General approach

The Review will be undertaken in a collegial manner through individual interviews, small group interviews and/or accepting written submissions, as appropriate, from selected stakeholder groups, including student organizations, faculty organizations, college and university administrations and governance bodies, and other such individuals and organizations as deemed appropriate.

Topics that will be covered in this interview are primarily those related to the *COPSE Act*, mandate, duties, and powers of the Council. Each interview will take up to one hour and we will be audio-recording it for quality purposes. Feedback from stakeholders will be used to help review COPSE's performance. Stakeholders will not be identified in any way in our report. All comments are protected under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA)* and all audio-recordings will be destroyed at the end of this research.

In the interviews, PRA will cover several topics related to the Council. Stakeholder opinions are very important to the review. The Council appreciates stakeholder participation and is interested in hearing their views in as much detail as possible. If during the interview there are some questions stakeholders don't know or cannot answer, or that may not be relevant, the interviewer will skip that particular section and move on to the next.

Following completion of the interviews, a Final Report will be prepared and provided to the Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy and to COPSE. The Final Report will be published on the COPSE website.

3.0 Background on the Council on Post-Secondary Education

The Council or COPSE was created through an Act of the provincial legislature (*The Council on Post-Secondary Education Act*) in November 1996 and has been in existence since April 1997.

The Council is an arms-length agency that functions as an intermediary between the post-secondary institutions and the Government. The Council comprises 11 Government appointed members. It is responsible for the allocation of funding to the province's universities and colleges; approves university and college programming; provides advice and policy direction to the government; and promotes fiscal responsibility and accountability in the post-secondary education sector.

The Council is supported by a staff secretariat of 13 provincial civil servants. The Secretariat undertakes activities and projects designed to fulfill the mandate and goals established by the Council and the Department of Advanced Education and Literacy. The Secretariat also works in consultation with the colleges and universities to support Council members in the development of policy and financial accountability.

The review will focus on COPSE as a corporate body and will cover its organizational and operational aspects. Organizational aspects refer to the powers of the Council, and its influence on the scope and nature of the post-secondary system. Operational aspects refer to the Council's performance in terms of its direction and activities over the last seven years.

A list of general themes that will be covered in the interview is provided on the following page.

Operational and Organizational Review of COPSE

Themes to be covered:

- 1) **Mandate and role of the Council**
- 2) **Executive powers of the Council**
- 3) **Advisory role of the Council**
- 4) **Consultative role of the Council**
- 5) **Programming**
- 6) **Funding**
 - a. Annual funding plan process
 - b. Summary budgeting
 - c. Multi-year funding
 - d. Capital planning
 - e. Tuition fees
 - f. Effects of economic recession
- 7) **COPSE Board and Secretariat**
- 8) **Policy-making and institutional impact**
 - a. Aboriginal learners
 - b. Distance delivery
 - c. Prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR) / recognition of prior learning (RPL)
 - d. Credit transfer and articulation
 - e. Quality assurance
 - f. System-wide impact
- 9) **Accountability**
 - a. Annual reporting and statistical compendium
 - b. Survey research
- 10) **Reporting and working relationships**
 - a. Council chair
 - b. Council secretary
- 11) **Strengths and challenges**

Appendix C

Stakeholders who participated in this review

Interview list		
Name	Title	Institution
President		
The Honourable Lloyd Axworthy (Dr.)	President and Vice-Chancellor	University of Winnipeg
Dr. David Barnard	President and Vice-Chancellor	University of Manitoba
Raymonde Gagné	President	Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface
Dr. Gerald Gerbrandt	President	Canadian Mennonite University
Dr. Denise Henning	President and Vice-Chancellor	University College of the North
Dr. Louis Visentin	President and Vice-Chancellor	Brandon University
Dr. Jeff Zabudsky	President	Red River College
Vice President		
Bill Balan	Vice-President Finance & Administration	University of Winnipeg
Michael Emslie	Controller and Executive Director	
James Brinkhurst	Vice-President Administration & Finance	Assiniboine Community College
Alan Copeland	Vice-President Academic	Assiniboine Community College
Dr. Scott Grills	Vice-President Academic & Research	Brandon University
Scott Lamont	Vice-President Administration & Finance	Brandon University
Dr. Richard Lobdell	Vice-Provost Programs	University of Manitoba
Deborah McCallum	Vice-President Administration	University of Manitoba
Kathryn McNaughton	Vice-President Academic	University College of the North
Sandra Muilenburg	Chief Financial Officer	University College of the North
Cathy Rushton	Vice-President Finance & Administration	Red River College
Dr. Brian Stevenson	Vice-President Academic & Research	University of Winnipeg
Gerald Munt	Director of Strategic & Budgetary Priorities	
Ken Webb	Vice-President Academic & Research	Red River College
Board of Governors		
Debra Radi (with Lloyd Axworthy)	Chair of the Board of Regents	University of Winnipeg
Sheryl Feller	Chair, Board of Governors	Red River College
Terry Sargeant	Chair, Board of Governors	University of Manitoba
Faculty Association		
Dr. Brenda Austin-Smith	Past President	University of Manitoba Faculty Association
Linda Guse	Executive Director	
Prof. Brad McKenzie	President	
Dr. David Burely	Vice-President	University of Winnipeg Faculty Association
Dr. James Clark	President	Manitoba Organization of Faculty Associations
Jean Sourisseau	President	Red River College Faculty Association
Student Association		
Marakari Bayo	President	L'Association des étudiants du Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface
Brett Callin	Student Association	Assiniboine Community College Students' Association
David EisBrenner	Vice-President Advocate	The University of Winnipeg Students' Association
Stephen Montague	President	Brandon University Students' Union
Peter Nawrot	Vice-President Academic	University of Manitoba Graduate Students' Association
Stephen Pratt	President	Red River College Students' Association
Sid Rashid	President	The University of Manitoba Students' Union
Jonny Sopotiuik	Chair	Canadian Federation of Students Manitoba
COPSE		
Dr. James Allum	Chair	Council on Post-Secondary Education
Sid Rogers	Secretary	Council on Post-Secondary Education
Department of AEL		
Hon. Diane McGifford	Minister	Advanced Education and Literacy
Heather Reichert	Deputy Minister	Advanced Education and Literacy