



## NEWS RELEASE

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**For immediate release – September 2, 2005**

### **Athabasca University Accreditation AU becomes first Canadian university accredited in the U.S.**

Edmonton - Athabasca University (AU) -- Canada's premiere provider of distance education -- is the first Canadian university to become accredited in the United States. Accreditation is through the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), which assessed AU for three years on criteria including the quality and variety of course and program offerings, student services, admission and registration services, faculty, and learning support. This assessment was based, in part, on a comprehensive self-study produced by the university via a network of task forces which included staff, faculty and student representatives.

Athabasca University Students' Union (AUSU) believes that U.S. accreditation will further increase the standing of Athabasca University in the North American post-secondary market, and will provide enhanced opportunities for members who want a "portable" degree. U.S. accreditation also makes AU a viable alternative for U.S. students who are funded by government or private organizations that only fund studies at accredited universities. Moreover, it highlights AU's reputation as a unique university that continues to blaze trails in the global education market.

This landmark decision furthers AU's mission of providing accessible, high-quality post-secondary learning opportunities, and to removing barriers to higher education. Further, the stringent requirements of the MSCHE committee will ensure that AU continues to provide an exceptional quality of education and a flexible learning environment that allows students to fit higher education in to any lifestyle. AUSU applauds AU for undertaking this commitment that will benefit our members across the globe.

Athabasca University has long been known as "Canada's Open University." Now it will be recognized for delivering exceptional educational alternatives to our members all over North America and around the world. AUSU already has more than 800 members inside the U.S.

Athabasca University serves more than 45,000 students yearly in undergraduate and graduate programs delivered at a distance. AUSU is one of few students' organizations in the world devoted to serving the needs of students of distance education. It currently represents nearly 35,000 Athabasca University undergraduates.

Information on U.S. accreditation can be found at the MSCHE and Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) websites: [www.msche.org](http://www.msche.org) and [www.chea.org](http://www.chea.org).

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