



POLICY 9.10

POSITION POLICY

External Relations: Athabasca University's National Presence

POLICY INTENT

To outline AUSU's position on creating a national presence for Athabasca University in the context of government and funding.

POLICY RESPONSIBILITY

AUSU Council

POLICY RESEARCH

Athabasca University (AU) is an online university with physical locations in Athabasca, Edmonton, and Calgary in the province of Alberta. Despite this, many of Athabasca University's students are located outside of Alberta. According to AU's student statistics, only 40% of students reside within Alberta, while around the same amount live in Ontarioⁱ. Athabasca University considers itself to be "Canada's Open University."ⁱⁱ

Though AU serves students located across Canada, funding is only received from the Government of Alberta. There may be some opportunities for AU to broaden relationships with other provincial governments to help reduce barriers to out-of-province students and enhance the learning environment for all students.

There are partnerships that AUSU should pursue in order to help enhance the national presence of Athabasca University and provide more opportunities to its students. These partnerships may include relationship-building with provincial advocacy groups located outside of Alberta, such as the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance (OUSA)ⁱⁱⁱ, or the BC Federation of Students (BCFS)^{iv} to gain the opportunity to lobby to provincial governments outside of Alberta. A partnership with L'Union Étudiante du Quebec (L'UEQ)^v should be fostered by AUSU in order to address the fact that Quebec students cannot access student aid for studies at Athabasca University^{vi}. AUSU should continue to partner with AU to bring the Athabasca University student perspective to the government.

These partnerships could yield benefits for AU and, in turn, its students. Some outcomes could include increased funding from provincial governments external to Alberta or the Government of Alberta, federal funding, more Quebec students who may acquire access to AU through student aid, or an increased presence in the national post-secondary community. Increased funding would help provide stability and growth within the institution, which would help AU to continue finding innovative ways to further develop and improve upon the student experience, according to the Imagine strategic plan^{vii} and Learning Framework^{viii}.

Be it resolved that the Athabasca University Students' Union should seek out and build partnerships with pan-Canadian provincial governments, provincial groups, the federal government, and national

groups in order to foster more support for the growth of Athabasca University as it implements the Imagine Plan and Learning Framework.

The Athabasca University Students' Union holds the position that Athabasca University should work to build relationships with provincial governments as well as the federal government in order to show the value Athabasca University brings to students across the country, and to seek additional funding for students residing out-of-province.

POLICY HISTORY

Original Approval Date: July 27, 2005
Last Review Date: September 2020
Review by Date: August 2021

ⁱ Facts and Statistics. (February 3, 2016.). Retrieved February 7, 2019 from <https://www.athabascau.ca/aboutau/media/aufacts/>.

ⁱⁱ About AU. (n.d.). Retrieved February 7, 2019 from <https://www.athabascau.ca/aboutau/>.

ⁱⁱⁱ About. (n.d.). Retrieved February 7, 2019 from <https://www.ousa.ca/about>.

^{iv} About. (n.d.). Retrieved February 7, 2019 from <http://www.wearebcstudents.ca/about>.

^v How it Works. (n.d.). Retrieved February 7, 2019 from <https://unionetudiante.ca/howitworks/>.

^{vi} Eligibility Requirements. (n.d.). Retrieved February 7, 2019 from <http://www.afe.gouv.qc.ca/en/loans-and-bursariesfull-time-studies/loans-and-bursaries-program/eligibility-requirements/>.

^{vii} Imagine: Transforming Lives, Transforming Communities. (n.d.). Retrieved February 7, 2019 from http://imagine.athabascau.ca/files/StrategyPlan_2018.pdf.

^{viii} Designing AU's Learning Framework. (December 19, 2018). Retrieved February 7, 2018 from <http://opvpa.athabascau.ca/learning-framework/index.php>.