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Francophone college proposed for U of A

CATHERINE SCOTT
News Staff

Edmonton students hoping to continue their postsecondary studies in French, but who don't necessarily want or need a university degree, may have their wishes granted if a proposed francophone community college is approved.

The proposal is currently under review and has not yet been approved. But according to Dr Art Quinney, acting University provost and vice-president (academic), if everything runs according to plan, the community college should be up and running by September 2008.

He also explained how the program would be associated with Campus St Jean (CSJ), the U of A's francophone campus.

"It would be a program of Campus St Jean—the faculty—and administered through the faculty, so clearly it's a program that reports to the dean," Quinney said.

Programs such as Business Education, and Community Development are under consideration to be the three major areas of study for the community college. The focus would be to put forth programs that are needed and attractive to potential students.

"There is definitely some interest ... for [students] to continue their education in French," Quinney said.

Dr Marc Arnal, Dean of CSJ, clarified that if everything is approved, the francophone community college would have its own budget, administration, and advisory body. It would report to the same Faculty Council and would essentially answer to the dean of CSJ. The students would be

considered U of A students and have the same rights, responsibilities, and fees as other students.

Arnal believes that the college will satisfy a community need and will complete French-language instruction for students in Western Canada who have been taught in either a Francophone or French immersion program from kindergarten to grade twelve.

Although the school wouldn't be the first of its kind in Western Canada—NAIT also offers a bilingual business program—it would offer other fields of study for Francophone or French immersion students.

"It's plugging a fairly major gap in the postsecondary possibilities for French-language instruction in Alberta, both for French first-language and French-immersion students," Arnal explained.

There are still a few details that need to be worked out, such as funding for the new program, making adjustments to University websites—most notably BearTracks—and the distribution of diplomas and certificates.

The proposed community college would also aim to strengthen the ties the U of A has with its surrounding communities, placing it in an advantageous position within western Canada by offering a unique program.

"I'm feeling cautiously optimistic about [the proposal]. It's a fairly innovative thing for the [U of A] to get into," Arnal said. "If you look at our new mission statements coming out of the President's office, the [U of A] is intent on being very relevant within its community, and it is clearly in that vein."



UPDATE THAT SIGN Campus Saint Jean is looking to expand French-language courses with a new community college.



ADDRESSING GLOBAL INEQUALITIES Dr Satya Das from the John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights speaks on issues affecting gender and human rights during a speakers series on 12 June at the Faculty of Extension.

Islam scholar headed to U

JEN HUYGEN
News Staff

The University of Alberta is seeking to gain notoriety in its religious studies program through the recent appointment of a world-renowned Islamic scholar.

Dr Ibrahim Abu-Rabi has been named holder of the newly endowed Edmonton Council of Muslim Communities (ECMC) chair in Islamic studies, which will operate through the religious studies program at the U of A.

According to Gurstan Dacks, acting dean of Arts, Abu-Rabi will bring with him a wide range of initiatives and enthusiasm.

"[He's a] very dynamic individual with quite expansive ideas about advancing scholarship on Islam in the University of Alberta," Dacks said.

The position was established largely through the initiative and financial contribution of the ECMC, with funding matched by the provincial government and additional financial support provided by the University.

According to Willi Braun, director of the U of A's religious studies program, Abu-Rabi will be educating students on the history and traditions of Islam, as well as modern issues affecting Muslims around the world.

"The chair will be affiliated with the program in religious studies, and the primary mandate is to teach undergraduate and graduate students in the diverse traditions of Islam," Braun explained. "[It will] engage both the Muslim community and the public at large on issues that have to do with Islam and Muslims across the world, but especially locally."

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Mad old-school props

Ten people got doctorates without spending \$50 000 and drinking Red Bull all night. Are you spiteful?

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The Force in the Flesh

Local author Shane Turgeon's new book shows just how many people have turned to the dark-inked side.

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