

# PEQAB

Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board  
Commission d'évaluation de la qualité de l'éducation postsecondaire

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August 22, 2007

The Honourable Christopher Bentley  
Minister, Training Colleges and Universities  
3<sup>rd</sup> floor, 900 Bay Street  
Toronto, ON M7A 1L2

Dear Minister:

**Re: Application from Humber College Institute of Technology  
and Advanced Learning  
Application for Ministerial consent to offer a Bachelor of Applied Arts  
(Paralegal Studies) program:  
Recommendation to Grant Consent**

Pursuant to section 5(1) of the *Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000*, on December 20, 2006, Humber College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning applied to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities for consent to continue to offer a Bachelor of Applied Arts (Paralegal Studies) program, the current consent for which is due to expire on December 31, 2007, and the first cohort for which completed the program on April 20, 2007. In accordance with section 5.2 of the *Act*, you referred the application on January 26, 2007, to the Board for its review and recommendation. The Board reviewed the application in accordance with its *Handbook for CAAT Renewals, May, 2006*, and gave final consideration to the application at its meeting of August 21, 2007.

Based on:

- the applicant's original submission,
- any additional material submitted by the applicant, and
- the Board's assessment of the information against the Board's standards and benchmarks for a bachelor degree in an applied area of study,

the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board recommends that you **grant consent until February 1, 2010**, to Humber College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning to offer a Bachelor of Applied Arts (Paralegal Studies), to be abbreviated B.A.A., at its Lakeshore Campus.

Yours truly,



Dale Patterson,  
Chair

cc Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board  
Philip Steenkamp, Deputy Minister, MTCU  
Janet Mason, Assistant Deputy Minister, Postsecondary Division, MTCU  
Shamira Madhany, Director, Colleges Branch, MTCU

## BACKGROUND REPORT

### Humber College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning Application for Ministerial consent to offer a Bachelor of Applied Arts (Paralegal Studies) program: Recommendation to Grant Consent

Pursuant to section 5(1) of the *Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000*, on December 20, 2006, Humber College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning applied to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities for consent to continue to offer a Bachelor of Applied Arts (Paralegal Studies) program, the current consent for which is due to expire on December 31, 2007, and the first cohort for which completed the program on April 20, 2007.

#### Procedures

In accordance with section 5.2 of the *Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000*, you referred the application on January 26, 2007, to the Board for its review and recommendation. In accordance with the Board's procedures, the proposal was posted on the Board's web site on January 30, 2007, and comments were invited from stakeholders and the general public. No comments were received.

#### *Processing of CAAT Renewal Proposals*

The Board's standard consent renewal application process involves a series of steps, one of the most important of which relates to the applicant's internal evaluation processes which are one of the terms and conditions of the consent: (i) the institutional self-study; (ii) the assessment of the self-study by and recommendations from the program evaluation committee, and (iii) the responding plan of action by the governing authority of the institution. Given the timing of the pilot project consents, however, the Board determined that no college would be able to submit a renewal application by the submission deadline date, where this three-step evaluation process could be completed with there having been at least one graduating class by the renewal submission deadline which was one year before the expiration date of the current consent.

In this circumstance, the Board saw little value in requiring a college to have completed the self-study process, and at its meeting of April 18, 2006, it decided to institute a renewal procedure:

- that retains all of the elements of the standard consent renewal process except the requirement for a college to complete and submit the Program Evaluation (item 2.b. above);
- that recommends to the Minister that, if a new consent is granted, it be scheduled to expire on a specific date which will be included in the recommendation;
- that this date will be based on the scheduled completion date of the initial class of students plus approximately two years - thus giving the college the time to conduct a program

evaluation based on all of the relevant information, and the Board the time to receive and consider this information; and

- that the subsequent application for consent renewal will be subject to the full submission and review process.

At its June meeting, the Board confirmed its procedure for the processing of CAAT consent renewal proposals.

1. The full Board would consider Part A, "Report on the Delivery of the Current Consent Program", of its *Handbook for CAAT Renewals, May, 2006*, of each application.

- It would make made general and specific observations for the consideration of the vetting committee.
- While the Board noted that it was not responsible for investigating and determining compliance issues, if the Board found any items in Part A of the application that appeared to be possible cases of non-compliance, these were to be identified and included in the Board's background report on the application.

2. The Board designated three of its members to function as a "vetting" committee for the CAAT renewal proposals. The function of the vetting committee is to serve as a screening committee, reviewing each of these submissions, in particular with regard to Part B of the application, "Application for New Consent for a Current Consent Program", of its *Handbook for CAAT Renewals, May, 2006*, before their consideration by the full Board, with an eye to the following questions:

- Should the Board seek advice from quality assessors (i.e. external reviewers) or if the program so straightforward and of good quality that there is no need for outside assessment?
- If there should be outside assessment, should there be a full quality assessment panel (QAP) of three people, or could one expert in the discipline suffice to address a limited issue?
- What salient issues should the Board ask quality assessors to report upon (e.g. retention/attrition rates, faculty qualifications, library/lab resources, curricular content, etc.)?

#### *Processing of Humber Renewal Proposal*

The Board examined the information contained in Part A "Report on the Delivery of the Current Consent Program" of the Humber application. It made general and specific observations for the consideration of the Board's vetting committee. It did not uncover any items in the application that were cases of possible non-compliance.

The Board's Vetting Committee met on July 31 where it examined the application and fashioned its report and recommendation to the Board. It was the committee's recommendation that an independent assessment of any aspects of the proposed program was not required.

### **Board Recommendation**

At its meeting of August 21, 2007, the Board formed its recommendation to the Minister on the application from Humber College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning for consent to offer this program.

Based on:

- the applicant's original submission,
- any additional material submitted by the applicant, and
- the Board's assessment of the information against the Board's standards and benchmarks for a bachelor degree in an applied area of study,

the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board recommends that you **grant consent until February 1, 2010**, to Humber College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning to offer a Bachelor of Applied Arts (Paralegal Studies), to be abbreviated B.A.A., at its Lakeshore Campus.

### **Board's Findings**

The Board finds that the program **meets** all of the relevant Board's standards and benchmarks published in the Board's *Handbook for CAAT Renewals, May, 2006*.

### **Program Abstract:**

The Bachelor of Applied Arts degree program in Paralegal Studies is the only one of its kind offered in Ontario. This program provides a comprehensive approach to paralegal studies, with substantive courses in tort and contract law, landlord and tenant law, immigration and refugee law, debtor and creditor rights, and employment and labour law. Students acquire the essential tools for success as paralegals through the in-depth study of evidence and advocacy, negotiation, mediation and arbitration, legal research, legal writing, professional ethics, and business entrepreneurship. Upon completion of this program, graduates will have a solid understanding of legal concepts, values and principles integral to the Canadian legal system, coupled with superior analytical, research, problem solving and communication skills.

A team of law professionals designed the curriculum and the degree has earned the support of the Paralegal Society of Ontario, the Canadian Association of Paralegals, the Prosecutors' Association of Ontario, and the Ontario Association of Professional Searchers of Records.

The program prepares graduates to work as paralegals in specialized paralegal firms, as court agents performing law-related services for law firms and government departments, and as prosecutors for municipalities in certain types of court and tribunal settings. Typical career titles include small claims court agent, provincial offences prosecutor, immigration "counsel," legal researcher, investigator, court monitor, searcher/investigator of public records, and manager - paralegal firm.

### **Program Length:**

8 in-class semesters; one 14-week work placement

**Current Enrolment:**

Approximately 210 students in the 4 years of the program.

**Public/Stakeholder Comments:**

There were no stakeholder comments.

**Possible compliance issues:**

None were noted by the Board

**Changes to the Proposal made as a Result of the Assessment Process:**

There were no changes made to the proposed program as a result of the renewal assessment process.