

EDUCATION

Report blot on resume for new college director

Alberta auditor general critical of Alberta college for program formerly run by new hire at Okanagan College

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The Daily Courier

Okanagan College's new director of international education comes to the Valley from a program that has just been slammed in an Alberta auditor general's report.

Russel Boris was director of the international education division at Medicine Hat College. He just began his post at Okanagan College July 2.

"I feel bad for my former employer," Boris said Wednesday.

"I wasn't named in the report, but it did point out that Medicine Hat College needs better processes for international education. That's fair. International education programs can be better integrated into the college community."

Boris worked in Medicine Hat College's international program for 16 years, most recently as director.

Okanagan College was aware

of the audit, but not its contents.

"When we interviewed Mr. Boris for the job, he did inform us that an audit was going on, but there were no details yet," said Charlotte Kushner, Okanagan College's vice-president of students.

"We will be reviewing the findings carefully with Mr. Boris."

Kushner declined to say if Boris would have been hired had Okanagan College seen the auditor's report first, saying that falls under employer-employee confidentiality.

However, she did add: "Mr. Boris went through a rigorous hiring process and was the successful candidate."

Audits of post-secondary schools and departments are not unusual.

The 26-page Alberta report was released early this month and focused specifically on Medicine Hat College's international education division.

"We found the college does not have effective systems to deliver international programming and manage its risks appropriately," said Alberta auditor general Merwan Saher.



Boris

"The international education division operated independently and largely outside of the college's control systems. Board oversight of international education has failed."

Medicine Hat College president Ralph Weeks quit in late June just before the report was submitted to the Alberta government.

The auditor general also didn't like that a lot of money was spent on travel for Medicine Hat College representatives to recruit international students without followup as to whether the trips were successful or not.

Generally, the auditor general recommended Medicine Hat College establish specific targets, expected outcomes and measures of performance for its international education program.

Meanwhile, Boris said he is proud of what he achieved in Medicine Hat — steady growth in the number of international students from 63 different countries to 15 per cent of enrolment.

Most of the students come from India, China, Japan and Korea.

Boris says Okanagan College has great processes in place for its international education programs and he's looking forward to working at the school.