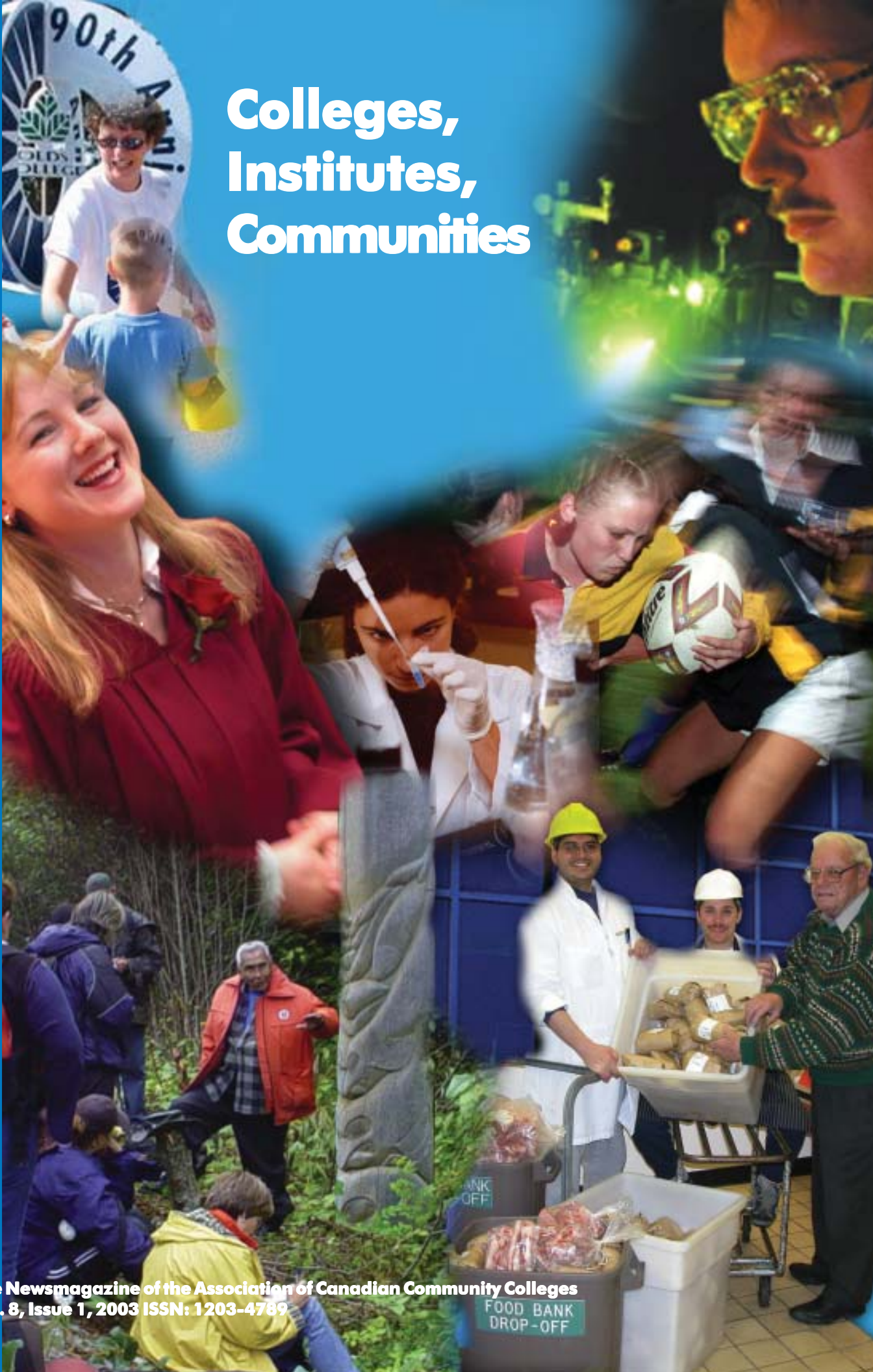


COLLEGE CANADA

Colleges, Institutes, Communities



The Newsmagazine of the Association of Canadian Community Colleges
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Canadian Colleges

The Power of Connectivity

**By Ron
Woodward
President,
Red Deer
College**

Colleges...community...colleges. We often talk about colleges and communities in the same breath, but really what is the connection between them? This issue of College Canada provides insight into the relationships between colleges and their communities.

In Canada, there are more than 150 public colleges (known as colleges, technical institutes, cégeps, university colleges and even some community colleges) with 60,000 full-time and 150,000 part-time staff serving approximately 2.5 million learners a year in over 900 communities. In addition to their primary roles of preparing people for work (both entry and retraining) and for further learning through transfer programs, colleges serve as centres for community social and cultural activity; assist local and regional businesses and organizations to innovate through the adoption of new processes and products; and, serve as a window to the world through international programs and services.

Each college connects to its communities in unique ways, and indeed defines its communities in unique ways. Whatever the college-community relationships may be, they are always of mutual benefit and contribute to a healthy community characterized by economic viability, social responsibility and engagement, cultural diversity and appreciation and environmental sustainability.

Colleges make significant economic contributions to their communities through learner, staff and institutional expenditures. For example, a recent socio-economic study undertaken by the Alberta Association of Colleges and Technical Institutes demonstrates that four percent of Alberta's economy is attributable to colleges and technical institutes.

The Hon. Paul Martin, addressing a group of college presidents and board chairs two years ago, spoke passionately about the role of colleges in innovation in Canada. He described innovation as a process that occurs in small- and medium-sized companies (SMEs) in communities all across the country. Stressing the presence of colleges in so many rural and urban communities, Mr. Martin emphasized the important role that colleges are playing (and can play) in supporting applied research in SMEs and providing highly-skilled people as a fundamental key to innovation. The core of Mr. Martin's message was that colleges make a difference because of their connection to their communities.

Much more than supporters of SMEs, many colleges are connected to their communities through a wide variety of services. For example, colleges provide targeted opportunities for disadvantaged people, youth, Aboriginals and other special needs groups to learn and increase their participation in society. They may help improve access to government programs, services and financial resources; foster strategic partnerships within and amongst communities and governments to facilitate community development; and promote their communities as attractive places to live and raise families.

Colleges play a key role in developing and maintaining community infrastructure, strengthening community capacity building through leadership and skills development and connecting their communities to the world. As such, the importance of colleges to rural and smaller urban areas goes well beyond traditional learning and training. They are often the catalysts for community economic and social development, especially outside of large urban areas.

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Rooted in and created to reflect the communities they serve, colleges are dynamic institutions that adapt and change with the changing social, economic, cultural and environmental needs of their communities. But if colleges are so closely connected to their communities, what is it that distinguishes them from other community and learning organizations? How has this connection changed over the past five decades since the inception of the "college movement" in Canada? Are colleges as connected to their communities now as they have been in the past? The "winds of change" are evident in how colleges are interacting with their communities and vice versa. Some would argue that colleges are returning to their roots, while others would say that they are discovering their future.

We see some colleges trying to become more "university like," being much more proactive in the international community and engaging in commercial activities. Are these changes the result of new connections with their communities or are they a trend towards disconnecting from traditional community roots? Are they driven by the desire to better serve the community or to survive financially and politically? I believe both concepts influence the actions of Canadian colleges in the 21st century.

Not only is the "definition" of a college changing, so is the concept of "community." Historically, colleges served what can be described as a "geographic community" where the institution provided programs and services in pretty much a monopolistic fashion. For decades, colleges operated on a "build it and they will come" model without much fear of competition.

In the 21st century all that has changed. Learning opportunities are available through a variety of modes from literally around the world and colleges are now serving "communities of interest" that go well beyond their traditional geographic boundaries. They offer courses and programs for sectors that may be provincial or national in scope or have campuses in communities well outside their geographic region, often in other countries, to deliver specialized programs and services. Communities are also defined more and more by partnerships with other learning institutions that help to better serve the college's catchment area and that capitalize on or use the expertise of the local college in other communities. Businesses and other

organizations partner with colleges to access their expertise and to bring needed expertise to the college. The number and types of partnerships are defining a new set of communities for colleges.

In the midst of new definitions of community, and partnerships that redefine community, I believe it is essential for colleges to maintain connectivity to their geographic community. The "roots" of colleges in these communities is a constant that sustains them and gives them the best possible sense of purpose, now and in the future. I hold the view that colleges and communities are a reflection of one another. A strong and healthy community helps to ensure that the community's college is also strong and healthy, and vice versa.

When colleges lose their sense of connectivity to the communities they are a part of, they lose much of their impact and effectiveness. The challenge for colleges is to engage in learning programs and services that reflect the needs and culture of their communities while being part of regional, provincial, national and international "systems." As the needs of learners and business change amidst local, national and global influences, colleges need to connect to their communities in new ways that enable people to participate and contribute to the success of their communities. Access to all kinds of learning programs/services where and when learners want them is now a basic expectation. The challenge of meeting community expectations in a timely and cost effective manner is one that colleges struggle with on a daily basis. The need for community support in addressing these challenges has never been greater in the history of the college movement.

The power of connectivity to communities is what makes Canadian colleges unique participants in the social, economic and cultural well being of our country. Colleges contribute to the success of communities (however we choose to define them) in diverse ways that cannot be replicated through other public institutions. The articles that follow give you a perspective into some of the results of this connectivity. They are but a glimpse into the multitude of ways colleges add value to their communities, to the success of the people who live there and to the well being of our country and the world. I invite you to learn more about the college in your community and how you can become better connected to it. ■

Working with Community Partners

to ensure access to education

**By Diana Twiss, Faculty
Community Development and Outreach Department
Capilano College, North Vancouver, BC**

For many people going to college is an exciting time; learning new things, wrestling with ideas, making friends and getting on the path to gainful employment. Most college systems are well set up to encourage and support these learners, but with an emphasis on those who can attend the college on a regular basis. What about the people who can't get to the college campus because they work full-time, are single parents, lack the physical ability to get there, are struggling with substance abuse, can't make the mental leap or feel there is no place for them at a college?

At Capilano College, the Community Development and Outreach Department is devoted to bringing learning right to the community and offering educational programming of all kinds. We work with community partners to ensure that learners will not only be able to get to the college, but once here, will find it a welcoming place where they can be successful. Or, we go right into the community and deliver educational programming in community centres, drop-in centres or work sites.

The Foundations Division, under the leadership of James Cooke, Vice-President, Student and Institutional Support, offers the following programs for learners who have difficulty gaining access to education: the Adult Special Education program for students with disabilities; the Speech Assisted Reading and Writing Program (SARAW) for students with multiple physical disabilities; and, a First Nations College Preparation program to support aboriginal learners.

Each of these programs is highly innovative and exists because of the vision and dedication of a few key people to provide others, regardless of their barriers, with access to education. Capilano's Adult Special Education (ASE) Department has been in existence for 20 years providing programs for adults with a cross section of disabilities and barriers ranging from Autism, Downs Syndrome, AD/HD, Asperger's Disease to learning and physical disabilities.

The ASE department offers two programs, each one providing students with a variety of academic and life skills as well as practical work experience in partnership with hundreds of local employers in the lower mainland, including Rona, Extra Foods, Safeway, IGA, Save-On Foods, and Zellers.

Capilano College also supports marginalized learners through the SARAW program. In partnership with the Neil Squire Foundation, a leader in developing technology for people with disabilities, SARAW was created as a talking computer program designed to help teach basic reading and writing skills to adults with severe physical disabilities who are non-verbal. These individuals are often unable to turn pages in a book, hold a pencil or speak. For them, SARAW is not simply another teaching tool; it is the only way they can participate in literacy classrooms.

Supporting students through the transition to college is another way in which Capilano increases total community access to education. The First Nations College Preparation (FNCP) program was developed at the North Vancouver campus in cooperation with the First Nations of the College's region. To make a successful transition to post-secondary institutions, First Nations students are offered an educational experience that increases their confidence by integrating the social and academic aspects of successful college preparation.

The community partners in the ASE, SARAW and First Nations programs are essential to the success of the initiatives. They are the conduit which enables the learners to move from their present environment to the college learning environment and back again. The college would not be able to reach these learners and know how to best support them without the assistance of the community to which the learners belong. Many faculty members in the Foundations Division participate actively in their communities, sit on boards and volunteer at local

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COMMUNITY PARTNERS

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organizations. When we feel there is an educational need that can be filled, we work with the community organization to conduct needs assessments, hold focus groups and numerous meetings to develop the partnership and explore the key issue of “fit”. In other words, in what ways can the group’s learning need “fit” with what the college offers, or how can the college work within the community and offer the program?

If the “fit” indicates that we go out into the community to reach learners, we do it. For example, the Carnegie Learning Centre program, for which we have received the 2003 ACCC Program Excellence Award, is a model for reaching inner city citizens, on site. The program takes place in a reclaimed building in Vancouver’s downtown eastside, an area where many residents have experienced a steady process of marginalization due to addictions, health issues, unemployment, underemployment, violence and trauma and have been discouraged from seeking out opportunities for further education.

Capilano College and the Carnegie Community Centre have taken a collaborative approach to providing education in the downtown eastside, which has led to the creation of a vital, useful resource in the community. The Carnegie Learning Centre program is founded on the belief that literacy is about having access to the skills, the knowledge and the confidence to better negotiate one’s way through life and to make one’s voice heard. The Learning Centre offers access to learning in a way that is safe, relevant and respectful of “where the learner is at”. Through a series of small daily interactions, the program nurtures a sense of community and builds an atmosphere of learning for all involved.

The Women’s Information and Safe House (WISH) Learning Centre is also located in the downtown eastside. Using a program model similar to the Carnegie Learning centre, Capilano College in partnership with the WISH Drop In Centre Society, works with street involved women. With a supportive non-judgmental approach, instructors and women have challenged some of the fundamental myths about the ability and desire of women in the sex trade to participate in learning activities.

Offering literacy upgrading has also taken Capilano straight to the workplace in partnership with trade unions. These programs have led us to hospitals, sawmills, pulp and paper mills, oil refineries and most recently, the racetrack. At the Hastings Park Racecourse, Capilano College in partnership with Hasting Entertainment Inc., the Vancouver Backstretch Society, the Horsemen’s Benevolent and Protective Association of BC, and two unions on site, runs a learning centre in the backstretch for workers.

In peak season, about 659 people work the backstretch at Hastings Park Racecourse as grooms, hot walkers, exercise riders, pony people and valets. The seasonal nature and irregular and long hours of work makes it difficult for workers to access other learning opportunities in the community. Thus, having a learning centre right on site, run by peer tutors with the support of college instructors, allows learners to pop in at a time that is convenient for them.

Workplace education programs differ from most other adult education programs in the community, because it actually takes care of the hurdles faced by many adults. Participants in our workplace programs have wanted to upgrade their skills for a long time but could not because it required three things they did not have: time, energy and money. Offering programming right at the workplace allows workers immediate access to education.

Educators know that students benefit from the support offered by their communities because learning is about making connections and the best learning happens in relationships. The programs just described foster relationships and work to ensure that students have a sense of connectedness to their place of learning, be it the college, the workplace or their own community or drop-in centre. With the help of our community partners, Capilano College has developed a variety of ways to help students feel they have a place at the college, and in the event that they cannot come to the college, we’ve found creative ways to bring the college to them. ■

Selkirk College

Playing a Key Role in BC's

Rural Community Development

By Marilyn Luscombe
President
Selkirk College

Selkirk College, situated in the south eastern corner of British Columbia, is one of 11 public colleges in the province and one of six serving mainly rural communities. Created by the people through public referendum in 1965, the College has provided almost 40 years of post-secondary education services for the West Kootenay Boundary Region of British Columbia. Forty years spans a few generations, enough to bear witness to the profound impact of the College on the local residents. For example, Selkirk College's Board Chair, Ron Anderson, a Selkirk graduate, Chartered Accountant and partner in a successful local accounting firm, has said that "Selkirk College played a significant role in my personal success. It provided me access to a quality post-secondary education experience, and I have been able to return with my young family to this beautiful region with its outstanding lifestyle and to contribute to its success."

The contribution of the College on the socio-economic development of the area is recognized in many ways by our communities. For example, our new Selkirk Geospatial Research Centre (SGRC) received \$270,000 in financial support from local agencies and businesses in just a few months.

Established with primary funding of \$1.1 million from the Canada Foundation for Innovation and the British Columbia Knowledge Development Fund, the SGRC is a multi-disciplinary centre of excellence using state-of-the-art mapping and image processing technologies for research and education. The Centre will develop Geographic Information Systems (GIS) applications for use in

"The SGRC represents an important step for Selkirk College. For almost four decades, Selkirk College has been integral to community and human resource development through excellence in teaching and relevant curriculum. The SGRC amplifies this success by proving a supporting role in applied research that focuses on solving real, operational problems in Selkirk's communities", says Angus



all markets, from local to international, and will attract new industry and highly qualified people to the region. It will impact academics, business, industry, government, non-profit agencies and local citizens by providing access to specialized training and by engaging in community-minded research projects.

Graeme, Chair, School of Renewable Resources.

Planned and ongoing projects of the new Centre include: new ways to study biodiversity through the creation of a biodiversity atlas; avalanche hazard mapping to aid back

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country users; new methods of analysis to assist in sustainable forest management; examining landscape ecology for the impact of wildfires on forests; and community asset mapping to revitalize and enhance economic development in rural communities.

The picture-postcard community of Nakusp, located in the north end of the Region, has lived through boom and bust cycles and is currently in transition. Working with the SGRC to map the community's assets, Project Bootstrap is a new endeavour to revitalize Nakusp. Jennifer Cliff-Marks, the Project Coordinator, says "we are proud to be a partner with Selkirk College in this exciting initiative for our community."

Donna Delparte, SGRC Coordinator, praises the local agencies and businesses that provided key financial support. Aquila Networks Canada, one of the major donors, believed that the Centre was a natural fit with Aquila's reliance on the mapping and image processing technologies which are used daily in the operation of the electrical utility. A spokesperson for the company stated that "Aquila not only sees opportunities for collaboration on data, but great possibilities for innovative research, potential training and employment. We are proud to support the establishment of this facility." The Kootenay Association for Science and Technology, another major sponsor, indicated that "the pursuit of identified research areas will spur job creation and economic growth in the Region, helping to diversify an economy still largely dependent on natural resources."

Another new community-based development project that has far reaching implications for the Region is the College's Mir Centre for Peace. (Mir is an ancient Russian word for peace, community and the world.) The West Kootenay Boundary Region has been home to a large number of

Doukhobor families, as well as Japanese, Portugese and Italians. It also has a rich Aboriginal history. The Mir Centre came into being in 1999, when two instructors at the College, Myler and Linda Wilkinson, initiated the idea that a historic Doukhobor home on College property could be transformed into a significant meeting place for education that focused on understanding and building cultures of peace.

The superb natural setting, a sacred burial ground of the Sinixt peoples, is a bluff overlooking the confluence of the Kootenay and Columbia Rivers. Linda Wilkinson explains that "the Centre is being lauded by many, including international peace-maker, Stephen Lewis, as an ideal site where cultural and historical knowledge about peace will be shared, researched and ways developed to take that knowledge to our communities and the world". Dr. John and Muriel Walton, long-standing Kootenay residents and Mir Centre sponsors, speak of their interest and support: "Our family believes you can teach peace. We are only one representative of the many families in this Region who care about peace and about this project".

The Mir Centre vision has grown quickly into reality. With leadership from Selkirk College, the First Nations people and the Doukhobor community, the physical site has been transformed. Significant heritage reconstruction of the home has taken place with monies acquired from the B.C. Heritage Trust and the local community as well as volunteer labour, including that of College staff and students. First Nations people, in association with one of the local school districts, have recently built an arbour/meeting place and a traditional smokehouse. A third annual celebration in June 2003, hosted by the Sinixt Nation, dedicated these structures and celebrated the Mir Centre site. These annual events have attracted hundreds of participants. For

J.J. Verigin, Executive Director of the USCC Doukhobor community, the Mir Centre is more than an institute to study peace. "It will be a place for healing, because we all need to heal in order to move forward and build a better world."

The world has changed in the last 40 years and the College has changed with it. In spring 2003, the Board announced a significant restructuring process. Board Chair Anderson explains that "the Board knew that we needed to position the College to be stronger and more sustainable for the Region's communities."

As a result, the Regional Centre for Innovation and Development at the College's Trail Campus was created. This Centre now houses the main office of the new Division of Community, Corporate and International Development which will provide enhanced leadership for the College's work in serving communities, corporations and in increasing international activities for students and the Region. Plans for the new Centre include a Distributed Learning Centre, a Leadership Development Institute and a Teaching and Learning Centre, all with a focus on serving learners and communities of the Region in new and innovative ways.

All of these plans to support community development can be summed up by 2002 Order of Canada recipient, Audrey Moore, the former Mayor of Castlegar from 1977 to 1993, and Selkirk Board member (1994-2000) and Board Chair (1995-1999). She says that "Selkirk College has always taken a regional outlook. It has been a nexus for community development and a draw for businesses and industries locating in the Region. The College's faculty and staff and their intellectual and practical capacity have contributed an inordinate amount of energy to our communities' progress in many valuable ways." ■

Reaching Communities

By
Randell Morris,
Vice-President, Academic

The Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies (SIIT) has been reaching First Nation and Aboriginal communities since 1976. As an agent of change, SIIT has enriched the lives of First Nation and Aboriginal people through education, and in turn developed and enhanced the communities in which they live.

SIIT operates as an educational institution of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN). With Senators of the FSIN, Saskatchewan Tribal Council appointees and an FSIN executive member comprising the Board of Governors, SIIT is mandated to serve First Nations adults by providing vocational and technical employment programming, as well as educational services for continued career growth.

On July 1, 2000, provincial legislation enacted by the Province of Saskatchewan recognized SIIT as a post-secondary institution by way of the *Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies Act*. As such, SIIT became one of the inaugural First Nation-controlled post-secondary institutes in Canada and the 4th Institution in the Province of Saskatchewan with credit granting powers.

This new legislation has assisted SIIT students to transfer credits to and from other post-secondary institutions and to have their certificates and diplomas recognized at the provincial and inter-provincial level by both First Nation and non-First Nation employers.

SIIT initially delivered adult academic upgrading, introductory skills and trades and basic management training to First Nations adults throughout the province. The programming mix continues to evolve to meet the growing vocational and technical training needs of all the First Nation communities. Currently there are four main program areas within the Academic Department: Adult Education, Health and Community Studies, Trades and Industrial, and Management Studies and Information Technology. All programs strike a balance between the required technical and educational skills and the cultural traditions and knowledge of the students.

Program delivery takes place at nine permanent campuses located throughout the province along with

specific community-based training as requested. A negotiation process is held with political and educational leaders of the communities to jointly identify training needs and conduct general needs assessments to determine the best programs to generate qualified graduates. Most programs are then delivered through joint-management agreements with Tribal Councils and independent bands. These inclusive and collaborative efforts enable true community responsiveness and result in programming that meets both individual and collective needs.

An excellent example depicting both individual growth and community development can be found in our two-year First Nation Child Care diploma program, which centres on all aspects of Early Childhood Development and incorporates the First Nation backgrounds and ideals. The program was delivered in the community of Onion Lake First Nation. While a few of the graduates went on to transfer their credit to the University of Victoria to complete their Degree in Child and Youth Care, the majority were employed at the Child and Family Services department at Onion Lake, or put their skills to work at similar offices in nearby communities.

In recent years, the number of registered students in all programs has risen from approximately 700 enrollments in 1995 to over 1,600 in the 2001-2002 academic year. This growth can be attributed to both the population expansion faced by many aboriginal communities and to the successes achieved by SIIT in serving the educational needs of those communities. As First Nation and Aboriginal communities continue to grow, an increasing proportion of new entrants into the Canadian labor market will inevitably be First Nation or Aboriginal. Further educational programs must be made available and accessible to these communities. The implications for SIIT are that we must continue to actively and pro-actively seek partnerships with business and industry to deliver training programs that are directly linked to employment for our graduates. For example, we are presently working with SaskTel, one of Canada's

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Reaching

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largest telecommunication providers and one of Saskatchewan's largest employers, to explore succession planning, prepare for challenges surrounding future labour market shortages and identify key skills areas for SIIT graduates.

With our capacity to deliver programs to interested First Nation and Aboriginal communities and institutions outside of Saskatchewan, more and more Canadians of Aboriginal origin are viewing SIIT an "institution of choice". We have established working relationships with major institutions such as the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT) and the University of Victoria as well as private sector firms such as Syncrude. By implementing such transfer arrangements and

transferability of credit in various sectors with other institutions across the country, SIIT continues to build seamless educational and career laddering opportunities for our graduates and widen the development options available to our constituency communities.

While SIIT embraces and realizes an evolutionary vision for the future, the internal mechanisms within SIIT coupled with the political climate within which we operate will ensure that a culture of community engagement and inclusion is maintained throughout. The role played by the Institute in the social, cultural and economic aspects of the communities in which we operate is and will continue to be a key measure of our success. ■

Negahneewin College

Putting the "Community" in Community College

by

Lisa Schmidt

Negahneewin College of Indigenous Studies

The regional economy of Northwestern Ontario has traditionally been resource-based, relying heavily on forestry, mining and shipping. Today, these industries are in the midst of a transformation that has caused a shift in employment trends, mainly towards the service sector. At the same time, a shift in demographics is evident throughout the region. Mainstream statistical reports tend to focus on the stagnant population growth of the region due to the rising number of seniors in the area and the increasing numbers of youth moving to larger urban centres. What has sometimes been overlooked, however, is the

pattern of rapid growth in the Aboriginal population.¹

A profile of Northwestern Ontario ten years in the future suggests that the Aboriginal share of the total population will be at least 20 percent and as much as 50 percent. When this growth is placed in the context of the overall profile of Northwestern Ontario, it is immediately apparent that Aboriginal communities will be integral to the long-term sustainability of the entire regional economy, including Confederation College.

How will the College respond to community needs? "Negahneewin" is

an Ojibwe word meaning "to lead the way". It refers to a belief that in times of difficulty there are those who step forward to help find a way to move ahead.

In the late 1980s, a number of Aboriginal and Confederation College representatives jointly proposed a "Negahneewin Institute" at Confederation College, envisioning a facility that would provide academic, residential and daycare services for Indigenous students. Although this particular outcome was not realized, many of the community representatives who were a part of the initiative continued to work with the

College as members of the Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Council (APSETC), formed in 1990. In 1991, a milestone was achieved in the creation of an Aboriginal Studies Division. Throughout these developments, the members of APSETC had retained the idea of Negahneewin as an Aboriginal community-driven educational centre. During the 1990s this idea was reshaped into what eventually became, in 1999, Negahneewin College of Indigenous Studies, a college “*within and throughout*” Confederation College². The APSETC, in turn, adopted the name “Negahneewin Council”.

As the name suggests, Negahneewin College intends to lead the way through a time of change. It also reflects the historic leadership of

necessary to work with and among remote, rural and northern communities. This is exemplified in Negahneewin’s newest offering, a four-year bachelor of applied human services degree in “Indigenous Leadership and Community Development”. One of 35 new applied degrees being offered across Ontario, the program is supported by a wide-based consensus that leadership is a resource that now requires an even greater investment for regional growth and sustainability. To the communities of Northwestern Ontario, the relevance and timeliness of such a program is immediately recognizable.

Community development is a shared undertaking. The message consistently expressed by Negahneewin and Confederation is that Negahneewin does not have a

Both innovative and practical, the strategic relationship among Aboriginal communities and Confederation College taps into a new approach to intercultural relationships, one which does not emphasize solitudes. While the focus of a great deal of cross-cultural discourse appears to have been respect for difference, which is certainly important, there is a simultaneous shift taking place that attempts to strike a balance between difference and that which is held in common.

This shift in philosophy is also an effective and pragmatic strategy, particularly for the communities of Northwestern Ontario where notwithstanding racial, cultural or social differences there are a common set of challenges and experiences occasioned by geographic, economic

of Indigenous Studies

Aboriginal communities in Northwestern Ontario, who have maintained an ongoing dialogue with Confederation College since its inception in 1967.

Given the regional profile outlined above, the rationale for Negahneewin College of Indigenous Studies has become increasingly apparent to the entire college community. In many ways, the existence of Negahneewin *is* the practice of community development. Its activities are two-fold, on one hand focusing on the renewal of community-partnerships, and on the other, providing Indigenous-specific curriculum and expertise.

Program offerings concentrate on many of the central themes of community development and are intended to provide learners with an education that spans Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal contexts. Negahneewin’s programs are open to all, and relevant to any person, Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal, who seeks the knowledge and skills

separate or segregated understanding of itself, that its discrete identity “*within and throughout*” Confederation expresses an imaginative space rather than a physical structure.

The term “*throughout*” has been adopted by Negahneewin to express a view which is beginning to find its voice in the context of Aboriginal education – that in moving from a position of dependence, our objective ought not to be limited to independence but to foster interdependence. Indeed, the process of educating the College community has been one of resisting assumptions that Negahneewin would or should pursue complete structural independence. This has been a process of learning which the entire community, including Negahneewin itself, has undertaken. While supporting Aboriginal students is clearly a primary objective of Negahneewin, it is complemented by the mandate to assume leadership in the creation of common ground between Aboriginal peoples and Canadians, and between communities.

and social location. It is hoped that these challenges can be met head on by an inter-cultural community that promotes and celebrates its own diversity. ■

For more information, contact Brenda Small, Dean, Negahneewin College of Indigenous Studies, Room 226, Shuniah Building, P.O. Box 398, Thunder Bay, Ontario P7C 4W1 or tel.: 807-475-6658

Endnotes

1 According to the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs (DIAND), the Registered (i.e. status) Indian population is young, with a median age of 25, compared to a median of 35 years for all Canadians. About 53 percent of Registered Indians living on reserves are under 25 years old. Moreover, DIAND projects that between 1991 and 2016, the Aboriginal population will rise by 52 percent (compared to 22 percent for non-Aboriginal Canadians)

2 Negahneewin is one of three “centres of excellence” at Confederation College, along with the Aviation Centre of Excellence and Forestry Centre of Excellence.

George Brown - Toronto City College Involving Students in Urban Communities

By Carolyn Wong
Communications Officer

When Juliet Duncan walks around her downtown Toronto neighbourhood, she sees a lot of people who are less fortunate than herself with no money, no home and no one to turn to.

"I see a lot of people who are homeless in this area and the look in their eyes...you can see their frustration," she says. "And you wonder about their story."

For two days a week, Duncan hears many stories at the Native Women's Resource Centre located at 191 Gerrard St. E. near Sherbourne Street. By listening, she is helping those in need.

For the rest of the week, Duncan learns about other ways to help in the Community Worker Program at George Brown-Toronto City College. She

spends time both at school and at the Centre where she puts what she learns from textbooks to work.

Through such placements, Duncan and her classmates are being prepared for the working world when they graduate. "Hands-on training really helps you to be strong because you will come across tough situations," Duncan says. Placements are not only important for the students but also for the social service agencies who have students working with them. These organizations are better equipped to help their clients, which in turn improves the healthy development of the community.

There are hundreds of social agencies in Toronto and each one strives for growth and development of the community in its own unique way. Many of George Brown, Toronto City College's education centres, such as Nursing, Community Service and Development and Health Sciences, have mandatory work placements that allow students to become part of the social fabric and to strengthen its stitching.

"I had the urge to feel more active in the community and being in the program has helped me to focus that energy," Duncan says.

"I recognize that the programs the college offers are very practical and very specific to social concerns," says Tina Robinson, program manager at NWRC. "They are very in touch with the needs of the community."

A large urban centre like Toronto not only has to provide adequate social services but must also nurture other key areas in order to survive as a diverse, economically stable and fully functioning city.

In this multi-cultural community, creativity and arts affect the City's vitality and development profoundly. With three downtown campuses and several programs in the cultural sector such as dramatic arts, graphic design, fashion studies, culinary arts, film and television, George Brown-Toronto City College is right in the middle of all the action.

But not all the designing, filming, acting and creating happens on campus.

The Institute without Boundaries, a joint program with the college's School of Design and world-famous designer Bruce Mau, puts its students in a different kind of class.

"The students study in a work environment (at Bruce Mau's studio) rather than in a classroom environment," says Luigi Ferrara, director of the School of Design. "This is in line with our philosophy that the city is the classroom."

Students of this program learn multi-disciplinary design through a project that they must complete from start to finish called Massive Change. The ambitious assignment involves putting together a touring exhibition, a book, a radio show, a feature film, a product line and a number of public events all centred around positive change for the global community.

"I wanted more of a hands-on career opportunity in a cross-disciplinary environment," says Jennifer Leonard, one of the seven Institute without Boundaries students. "I loved the idea of being part of a think-tank working towards sustainability and distributed problem-solving on a global scale."

George Brown-Toronto City College is also focused on sustaining its local community by connecting individual pieces to make a better whole. With the launch of the unique Design Management program this January, design students will learn from leaders of the city's business sector.

"We are very much working on business and creativity because it is so key in the 21st century," says Ferrara. "Increasingly you need ideas and ideas come from creativity."

And it's not just the people in arts that are realizing this successful combination. Barry Wallace, a marketing professor, also had it in mind when creating a term project for his Services Marketing students.

As a jumping off point to the project, Wallace invited Susan Carter, Vice-President of Marketing and Communications for Tourism Toronto, to speak to his class about the recent downturn in the city's tourism industry.

From there, his students will develop marketing plans for specific attractions and the strongest projects will be presented to the City of Toronto tourism office.

"What I hope will happen is two-fold – students will

further develop their abilities to problem solve in a marketing context while furthering their own networking,” says Wallace. “And the tourism clients will receive some fresh ideas on how to offer their services to

their respective tourism consumers.”

These are only a handful of ways in which George Brown-Toronto City College carries out its important educational role at the heart of the province’s largest

city. The college, with practical programs in key sectors like hospitality, business, building technologies, performing arts and social services, takes pride in helping to nurture and feed the community

with graduates who have learned all about the wheels that drive the city and the people who make it grow and prosper. ■

Win-win

community partnerships

at Cégep Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu

by Serge Brassat
Director General,
Cégep Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu

Determined to make higher education accessible to as many young people as possible, the Government of Québec drastically changed the province’s system of higher education in 1968. Today, approximately 50 cégeps throughout the province offer tuition-free post-secondary pre-university and technical programs to a broad range of communities.

With no power to levy taxes or charge tuition, many of these institutions obtain 85 percent of their funding from government grants and generate the remaining 15 percent from ancillary fees and self-funding activities.

At Cégep Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, our spirit of entrepreneurship has increased our level of financial self-sufficiency to almost 35 percent of the budget. Our three external sources of revenue are: self-funded activities, community service partnerships and, recently, the Development Fund. Each of these three areas emphasizes the role of the Cégep in responding to, supporting and benefiting from the economic development of the local community.

Community and Self-funded Activities

Self-funded activities enable the Cégep to achieve two main objectives: outreach to the community and financial

stability. For example, a wide range of cultural, sports and other programs are made available to the community through the institution’s sports and community facilities. The public can register for sports activities and workshops organized by the Cégep or rent the college’s facilities and equipment. Our 800-seat Théâtre des Deux Rives, otherwise known as the auditorium, hosts various inter-collegial productions as well as some big name entertainment in theatre, dance, popular and classical music, as well as variety shows. All of which are open to the community.

Each year, almost 1,700 learners of all ages and from all walks of life take various short courses at the Cégep, leading to an Attestation of Collegial Studies through continuing education. These courses offer a means of skills upgrading and professional development for the regional workforce.

Other self-funded activities include our international cooperation activities as well as contracts with different government departments. These types of activities bring people to the region and the local community benefits economically and socially from the influx of trainees. For example, since 1996, Cégep Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu has provided a preparatory year at the Fort Saint-Jean campus to some 150 Francophone and

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Win-win

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Anglophone officer students, before they enter the Royal Military College of Canada in Kingston, for the Department of National Defence (DND). In the past two years, this partnership has expanded to include two new programs providing continuing education for officers and sub-officers. The Cégep's facilities are also used during the summer by the sailplane school of this same department, which offers various training programs to young male and female cadets 14 to 18 years old.

Service Partnerships

The Cégep also generates economic activity directly with the local community through service partnerships. For example, for more than five years, Actiforme Consultants has managed the Cégep's fitness centre. The financial agreement with this partner has funded renovation of the facility and provided higher quality services to students and the community.

On the municipal side, a Memorandum of Understanding between the city and the Cégep covers maintenance of outdoor sports fields (football, soccer, tennis, softball) as well as management of their use after class times. In exchange, municipal sports teams can use these fields free of charge.

Following a public call for tenders, the Cégep and the firm DOMISA have undertaken a contract to manage the municipality's indoor and outdoor pools. This partnership with DOMISA and the city provides the public with a unified program of swimming courses and activities in city pools, at the Cégep, at the Fort Saint-Jean campus and in outdoor pools during the summer season.

Over the years, the Cégep has also contracted management of its performance hall (Théâtre des Deux Rives) to SPEC, a local non-profit organization. The Memorandum of Understanding allows SPEC to provide a diverse, original cultural program that meets the expectations of the regional population.

Development Fund

Two years ago, the Cégep created the Development Fund to support the growth of the institution through various fundraising activities. To date, this foundation has organized an internal campaign that canvassed staff, students and parents as well as various fundraising activities, the largest of which is an annual golf tournament. This year, the Fund

is preparing to launch its first major campaign with community partners outside the Cégep.

Win-win partnerships

Cégep Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu relies heavily on its various self-funding activities and a range of partnerships, not only to balance its budget but also to provide its students and community with better services. In turn, the quality and range of services increase the value-added benefit of having a college in the region. For example, most of the Cégep's technical programs are delivered through a co-op initiative. The Bureau de liaison avec l'entreprise (BLE – business liaison office) coordinates various offers of internships to students, in Quebec and abroad. The BLE also hosts almost 60 French interns each year from Instituts universitaires de technologie (IUT) and carries out its mission in partnership with approximately 200 local businesses. Entrepreneurs, local companies, their employees and their families all benefit from this type of college involvement in the growth and development of the region.

The college plans to continue these types of initiatives, which support maximum efficiency in the resources made available to the community. We maintain regular contact with local authorities to source and extend our partnerships to other activities that can help to strengthen local economic development and promote a win-win situation for the college and the community. ■

NBCC Miramichi – Building Niche Markets for the Local Economy

By Noreen Lobban

Principal

New Brunswick Community College - Miramichi

Located in northeastern New Brunswick, NBCC Miramichi is one of eleven campuses within the New Brunswick Community College Network. Born as an alternative for local students to upgrade their skills in a variety of vocations; it has risen to become an educational leader for various sectors of the economy and has carved a renowned niche amongst not only the provincial and Maritime private sectors but also nationally and globally. In 2002, the College was named one of the top 10 new media schools in Canada by *Shift Magazine*.

Back in 1992, community leaders and educators, coming together as a group under the title “Shared Visions,” embarked on a journey to diversify the local economy through innovative college programming. The College doubled in size and added a Multimedia Learning Technologies Centre of Excellence in 1994. With a total investment of \$14.1 million, jointly provided by federal, provincial and industry partners, programming emphasized entrepreneurial training for all students.

This forward-thinking approach has had a significant impact on the rural Miramichi region. Miramichi Mayor Rupert Bernard says “an illustration of NBCC Miramichi’s importance to the community over the years has been the development of an information technology cluster, with the program offerings from the college creating more than 50 related IT businesses.” Wayne Carpenter of Enterprise Miramichi, a regional economic development organization, works closely with students from the college. He has noted that the

technical and managerial strengths of the graduates are contributing to the growth of knowledge-based companies in the Miramichi.

Carole Daley graduated from the Knowledge Engineering Technology program in 1996. She

The staff of the College are also key contributors to the development of the local community. For example, Kevin Gallant, a Learning Technologies instructor at the college, is the Communications Officer for both the Miramichi District of the Canadian



was one of a number of graduates to set up her own company, ALT Group Inc. Building technologies such as databases, e-learning systems and providing e-business solutions, Carole works primarily in Ontario and the United States but the company is located at Miratech Inc., a high tech entrepreneurial centre located in close proximity to NBCC Miramichi. In June 2003, ALT Group Inc. was the first company to be inducted into the NBCC Miramichi Wall of Fame, an initiative through which the College can honour and support the success of its graduates.

Power Squadron and the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists. Kevin also helped organize the first annual “Pumpkin Fling” to support various local school breakfast programs.

Mark Standing is one of a team of Program Managers working under the division of Extended Studies and Workforce Expansion. He and his team members are focused on responding to training needs in the local business community, in areas

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Building Niche Markets

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such as Forestry, Tourism, Manufacturing and Health Care. This division also oversees Provincial bilingual mandates in the areas of Fire Service Training and Mechanized Forestry Operations. NBCC Miramichi has been selected by the forestry industry as the Maritime trainer of choice for Mechanized Forestry Operations.

UPM Kymenne, a world class coated paper mill, is the largest employer in the Miramichi region, employing over 2,000 workers. The mill's Woodlands Director Doug Prebble values the relationship with NBCC Miramichi, as a broadly-based delivery agency. Commenting on the quality of training UPM was receiving through the college, an independent auditing firm recently stated that "[they] found the workers retained more of what they learned and were proud of what they learned. They also found it was a healthy environment for learning."

Weyerhaeuser, an oriented-strand board mill in Miramichi, has seen over 150 employees complete job specialty training through college programs. The mill's woodlands manager, Drew English, likes the flexibility of the course structure that can range from 40 weeks to a half-

day, depending on the needs of the worker.

Responding to a province wide labour market demand for health care professionals, Pauline Lordon, a Program Manager in Extended Studies and Workforce Expansion, implemented a Practical Nurse Program in partnership with NBCC Saint John and the Miramichi Regional Hospital. The program incorporates the use of technology and was able to access instructional expertise from Saint John as part of its delivery.

NBCC Miramichi has been striving to be a leader in this era of technology, to build a local niche market. And it is succeeding. As one of three satellite sites for the National Research Council Institute for Information Technology-e-Business, located in Fredericton, New Brunswick, the College can now work with the business community to pursue research and innovation opportunities. In the past six months, all of the College's computer labs have been upgraded with cutting edge technology, including the set up of a Thin Client lab. The IT department is working diligently to bring high speed links and the best of telecommunications to benefit the College as well as the community.

The links between NBCC Miramichi and the community – technological and otherwise – are clearly evident. By working closely with a group of local business community leaders, the programs at the College exist to support the local and provincial business sector. They also bring an international flavour through partnerships in Ireland, India, Singapore and the Philippines. As host to the annual Learn Tec Conference and Multimedia Media Awards since 1993, the College involves students and graduates in industry-oriented events and encourages them to work internationally with the College's partners.

NBCC Miramichi is unique in the New Brunswick system in that it now hosts a two-year University program on the Miramichi. It will continue to develop programs in new and emerging fields to support the development and diversification of the local community and promote the New Brunswick Prosperity Plan. ■