

## Recession pushes people back to school

**Shannon Proudfoot**

Canwest News Service

*Thursday, January 15, 2009*

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That's because Forbes, like more young Canadians facing an unfriendly job market, are choosing narrowly focused community college programs, while other students who would normally be graduating in the spring plan to return to university, causing a spike in grad school applications.



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CREDIT: Handout  
Proudfoot-Enrolment.jpg

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"Picture Alberta six months ago: Anybody could go into a McDonald's and make 15 bucks an hour or go to the oilpatch and make 50 bucks an hour, so why would you go to college, or university for that matter?" says Knight. "Large numbers of young people were drawn into employment because the opportunities were abundant and the salaries were so rich. But that's not quite the case anymore."

Ontario colleges enjoyed a 10 per cent jump in applications for programs starting in January - almost double last year's 5.1 per cent annual increase over the year before. Toronto's George Brown College alone has 13.5 per cent more students now than a year ago, with 10,000 applications waiting for September programs.

Nova Scotia Community College has seen the usual steady increase at its 13 campuses, says Jamie Hilts, vice-president academic, but layoffs at the Magna International plant in Sydney have fuelled big enrolment jumps at that location.

"What we're seeing is that people who are displaced now moving into things like welding and metal fabrication," he says.

At the University of Toronto, applications to graduate programs are up almost 10 per cent over this time last year, and other universities are bracing for the spike that typically accompanies an economic downturn.

"We're a counter-cyclical business in the graduate school market," says Kirk Hill, executive director of Simon Fraser University's business career management centre.

He estimates job offers have fallen by 25 per cent - largely in the last month or two - while contract work and internships have become more common. Students are flocking to co-op programs and employment workshops in an effort to shore up their chances, he adds.

Institutions in Manitoba, Alberta and Newfoundland say they have yet to see increased demand because their province's economies are still relatively stable.

"The job offers (for graduates) are still there in a lot of cases, but certainly not in the same numbers," says Lisa Russell, acting director of career development at Memorial University in Newfoundland. "I expect given another four or five months that in some of those cases we may not have job offers at all as the effects full trickle down."

Even in a contracting economy, administrators say the skills acquired in construction, health care and hospitality programs remain in high demand.

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## Poor economy boosts post-secondary numbers

### VCC student in auto course upbeat on future

**Shannon Proudfoot**

Canwest News Service

*Friday, January 16, 2009*

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# Economy pushing people to trades

## A decline in jobs is resulting in increased school enrolment, writes Shannon Proudfoot.

BY SHANNON PROUDFOOT, CANWEST NEWS SERVICE JANUARY 17, 2009

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## Downturn pushing students back to school

**Shannon Proudfoot**

Canwest News Service

*Saturday, January 17, 2009*

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## **Downturn strengthens community college enrolment**

### Young people narrow education focus to job-hungry sectors

**Shannon Proudfoot**

Canwest News Service

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