

# President's Update to the College Community

*Serving the communities of Northwestern BC*

**September 8, 2009**

## September 8 is International Literacy Day

In 1965, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) designated September 8 as International Literacy Day. It was first observed in 1967 and was established to focus attention on worldwide literacy needs. More than 780 million of the world's adults (nearly two-thirds of whom are women) do not know how to read or write, and between 94 and 115 million children lack access to education.

Literacy is a broad-based issue that touches almost every aspect of people's lives. Higher literacy levels result in a better quality of life through reduced poverty, lower unemployment, and decreased public assistance. It also improves self-confidence, parenting skills, increases job prospects and participation in community life in general.

In the Northwest, adult literacy is an ongoing challenge and the role of Northwest Community College and community groups in addressing literacy is an essential one. Over the past years, NWCC has made literacy a key focus of our outreach. Working in partnerships with various community organizations, schools and the provincial literacy association, NWCC is an active partner in the Northwest. Literacy is offered through our CCP and ESWK programs as well as through many cost-shared college/community literacy grants. Many graduates of these programs carry on to post-secondary education. The connections we make at the community level frequently give them the foundation and confidence to pursue higher education.

Given the challenges of literacy for many living in the Northwest, it is imperative that NWCC maintain, and where possible, expand our programming efforts to enhance literacy levels. The challenges of the provincial deficit resulted in a cut to literacy coordinator positions at colleges throughout the province. For NWCC, this \$100,000 cut would have severely undermined our literacy efforts and the work we are doing for learners. Because of the importance of literacy to NWCC, we will continue to fund this position and have challenged the finance department to recommend other cuts we can make to ensure this essential work continues.

Many adult Canadians lack literacy and other essential skill competencies required for full participation in the economy and society. On International Literacy Day, I encourage the College community to learn more about the role NWCC plays in literacy and to join us in helping improve the statistics. For more information, contact Dee McCrae, Literacy Coordinator, Northwest Community College.

## Fall Registration Update

Overall, applications are up by 11 per cent, and registrations are up by 5.2 per cent. While not all departments are seeing increases in student enrolments, some have noticeable increases such as University Credit at Terrace Campus and Applied Coastal Ecology at Prince Rupert Campus. Clearly the recruitment efforts of these departments are helping to attract more students to the College.

My thanks to Michael Tugwood, who throughout the summer spent hours of time on the telephone helping students on our pending application file navigate their way to registering at NWCC. Michael will continue to focus his attention on contacting students well into September.

## Emergency Services Training Centre — Announcing FNESS partnership September 12

A change of plan — the new Emergency Services Training Centre will not officially open on September 12. What will be announced is the partnership and involvement of the First Nations Emergency Services Society (FNESS) funded by Indian and Northern Affairs (INAC).

It is a little known fact that the father of Ken McNeil, who is an instructor with our Freda Diesing School of Northwest Coast Art, was instrumental in founding FNESS. This will be a particularly auspicious day for Ken!

## House of Learning and Applied Research — Supporting Teaching and Learning Excellence

In an ongoing effort to provide teaching and learning support for faculty and staff, the House of Learning and Applied Research is ramping up the services available to employees.

**On-Line Learning Specialist, Glen Bowdon** (replacing Terrie McAloney), will support faculty in areas such as e-learning, course developments for web delivery and technical mentoring. Support will include workshops and conferences, advocacy for the teaching role, and career mentoring for faculty as teachers.

**Aboriginal Cultural Knowledge Development Specialist, Audrey Woods**, will support faculty in their goal of indigenizing their curricula, creating culturally appropriate learning materials, culturally healthy learners, delivering the best possible learning experience for aboriginal students, and developing themselves as teachers. Areas in which support is provided include culturally responsive curriculum and programming, generative curriculum, community access, and protocols.

**Professional and Staff Development Specialist, Kerrie Orr**, will promote excellence in teaching and learning by providing information and programming that will include workshops and conferences, advocacy for the teaching role, and career mentoring for faculty as teachers. Some general areas of support will cover inclusive curriculum, generative curriculum models, and culturally responsive curriculum and programming.

How is Northwest Community College funding these activities? While some funding is ongoing from our base grant, other funds have been contributed on a one-time only basis from prior year program funds that will be contingent on a successful first year. Success in this instance will be identified through feedback from the users of HLAR's resources, attainment of specific FTE goals and the eventual generation of sufficient revenues from workshops and services to partially cost-recover the expenses associated with operations.

## Budget News

The British Columbia government throne speech announced that BC is in a much larger deficit position than originally forecast: *"The pace, depth and scope of the economic crisis surpassed expectations... Government recognizes that some will be asked to make some significant adjustments."* In an effort to address this deficit, Treasury examined all ministries and departments over the summer to determine areas where funding might be clawed back. Funding already allocated for 2009–2010 was not exempt and Northwest Community College had some funds clawed back in non-base grant areas. Other Ministries in the government did not fare as well and are experiencing significant cutbacks in this fiscal year.

On September 1, the 2009–2010 budget was restated. I was glad to see that overall base funding levels for colleges in BC has been preserved. The next few years will be challenging for the province and for our students as government grapples with a significant budget deficit. We all need to continue to hold a very tight rein on expenditures and travel.

## Administrative Personnel Vacancies and Update

### New

*Vice-President, Finance & Administration* — Cathay Sousa

### Interim

*Director, Human Resources* — Valerie Cochran (former VP Human Resources, Capilano College)

### Retiring

Tony Reddy is retiring at the end of November

### Vacant

- *Dean of Health & Human Services*
- *Director, Institutional Research & Registrar*

Cathay will maintain operations in her former position of *Director of Institutional Research & Registrar* and will not be taking on the full duties of *Vice-President, Finance & Administration* until her former position is filled and oriented. In the interim, Cynthia and I will handle all financial matters and Cynthia will be the first point of contact for the same.

Please bear with the administrative team as Arlene, Cathay, Cynthia and I cope with larger than usual portfolios until vacancies are filled.

## Working to prevent the spread of influenza

In an effort to curb the spread of colds and flu this year, we are asking that all staff and students take extra precautions to ensure that appropriate hygiene is maintained. Particular attention to hand washing is extremely helpful and to assist, maintenance personnel have set up hand sanitizing dispensers at the entrances of all Campus buildings. Please take a moment to sanitize your hands as you enter buildings and help us keep those infected to a minimum.