

President's Update to the College Community

Serving the communities of Northwestern BC

April 29, 2009

Challenging the Paradigm — Summer Gathering 2009

Northwest Community College is on a transformative journey to indigenize the culture and practice of how it provides education in Northwest British Columbia.

In October 2007, the College organized the *Challenging the Paradigm* conference to further examine how Aboriginal and mainstream pedagogical paradigms can be integrated to the benefit of the learner. Our hope for that conference was to broaden our dialogue between educators and learners that would lead to real change.

In the fall of 2007, NWCC established the House of Learning & Applied Research (HLAR) to continue the dialogue of the 2007 conference and support the goals of indigenization. HLAR has worked with Aboriginal communities and organizations to further their engagement with the College, and initiated various campus events that celebrate Aboriginal culture, assisted employees to meet the pedagogical challenges associated with the transformation, and hosted a variety of learning events during the teaching year.

Our approach to indigenization is based on respecting Aboriginal values and needs, acknowledging Aboriginal tradition and culture, celebrating Aboriginal world-view and working closely with Aboriginal communities. This approach is providing the College community with tools for not only generating culturally responsive curriculum but also with the tools to re-examine our deep seated beliefs around curriculum delivery, college systems, processes and operating practices.

We want to share our experiences and learn from others by bringing Aboriginal scholars and leaders together with other educators in the post-secondary system. This summer, NWCC will host *Challenging the Paradigm 2009*. This four day event will focus on community engagement, innovations in pedagogy, and successes. *Challenging the Paradigm 2009* will be a *Summer Gathering* to examine how post-secondary institutions might redress colonization. It will provide a forum for college/institute educators, researchers and administrators to share ideas and innovative approaches to post-secondary education for aboriginal learners.

Totem pole project

Earl Muldon, along with Freda Diesing graduate, Arlene Ness, has begun the process of creating two 12-foot house poles for the Hazelton campus.

Muldon, better known as Delgamuukw, is the highest hereditary chief within the Gitksan Nation. The legal case of *Delgamuukw vs. the Queen* resulted in a famous leading decision of the Supreme Court of Canada, where the Court made its most definitive statement on the nature of Aboriginal title in Canada.

Delgamuukw is a renowned carver of both jewelry and wood who has been carving for decades. He is cited as being responsible for the launch of the Gitamaax School of Art and designed and built the carving shed at 'Ksan. A highlight of the Museum of Anthropology building is a set of massive doors carved in 1976 by four master Gitksan artists; Earl Muldon, Walter Harris, Art Sterritt and Vernon Stephens.

A blessing of the poles will occur in the next few weeks and work will progress over the spring and summer. The raising of the poles is slated for early September 2009.

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We are pleased that once again Dr. Leroy Littlebear will be joining us, along with Grand Chief Ed John of First Nations Summit, Denise Henning, President of the University College of the North in Manitoba, Lorna Williams from the Department of Teacher Training at UVIC, and JoAnne Archibald from UBC's House of Learning, among others.

Board members, administrators, faculty, staff and researchers from around Canada are encouraged to participate and share their views and best practices.

In addition, the *Summer Gathering* will feature Aboriginal music and cultural events, an art exhibition, crafts and various cultural workshops.

This is a significant professional development event open to all staff at NWCC. NWCC employees are encouraged to attend, and to carpool to and from all events. The dorms will be available at a reasonable rate for staff and out of town guests.

\$16.7M Granted to NWCC to Expand and Upgrade Smithers Campus

Infrastructure funds from the federal and provincial governments were awarded to NWCC for the renewal and expansion of Smithers Campus.

This project has been on the drawing board for many years, as demand has outstripped capacity at this antiquated facility. The case for a complete overhaul of the campus and the plea for additional space was issued in 2005 when a portable building providing office and classroom space was found unsafe and removed from the premises. Since then the College has been working with the facilities branch of the Ministry of Advanced Education to identify funding for the project.

Responding to encouragement from the Ministry, a business case was completed in early 2008. The business case process examined various options for the expansion and renewal of space for the Smithers facility, including examining other potential buildings and locations in the community of Smithers. An extensive renovation and expansion was deemed to be the most viable option.

The project is slated to begin by the end of June 2009 and will take approximately 18 months to complete.

NWCC signs agreement with Qingdao Technical College (QTC)

Ten business students from QTC will be arriving at Terrace Campus this fall to study within the Business Administration department. The students' arrival follows faculty exchanges between our two institutions and signing of an agreement in China on March 17, 2009.

During a four day visit to QTC this March, other possible institutional collaborations were discussed, such as program partnerships in the areas of hospitality, environmental studies and information technology. QTC honored my involvement with their institution by awarding me the position of *Professor* at QTC, planting a tree and engraving a stone to signify this new designation. I have been asked to return to QTC annually to present at various forums.

National Executive Leadership Institute (NELI)

Since 2007, I have been on the faculty of the Association of Canadian Community Colleges' National Executive Leadership Institute (NELI) for prospective presidents. I spent this last weekend in Victoria, delivering the NELI program, a series of intensive seminars designed to inform those interested in pursuing the role of college president, to ten students.

President vacancies are increasing and it's imperative that we seek to encourage and orientate interested leaders in the role and function of college president.

Leadership development is an increasingly important role for ACCC. Over the years it has hosted several NELI's for prospective Vice-Presidents, and for the first time this year, will be hosting a NELI for new or prospective Deans and Directors.