

# President's Update to the College Community

*Serving the communities of Northwestern BC*

**July 16, 2008**

## Budget Update

The 2008-09 budget has been finalized and posted to the Colleague system. Our apologies for the extreme lateness of this budget; but information from the government arrived much later than usual and was significantly different from what was expected. We had not, for example, expected to receive a 2.6% budget cut; nor be asked to deliver more FTEs at a greatly reduced cost. As discussed in my April Update, this news has presented significant challenges to the College and has meant that we will have a structural deficit that cannot be sustained beyond this year.

To balance the budget for 2008/09 various strategies were recommended by the Budget Task Force, which were implemented. Among them are:

- Tuition was increased by 2%
- FTEs and enrolment targets were scrutinized and all historically low-enrolled courses are being reviewed for cancelation in consultation with departments
- Cafeteria and catering operations are to become self-sustaining (currently the College subsidizes these operations)
- The Stewart campus was closed
- Cost savings in each individual budget centre were sought
- The Principal position in Terrace/Kitimat was not filled
- Strategies to reducing the cost of FTE delivery are being explored in those departments in which the costs of delivery exceeds funding from the government.

We are not out of the woods yet, and continue to look for cost saving measures. We have avoided, for this year, the layoffs and program cuts experienced at many of the other colleges and institutes.

Requesting suggestions and feedback: The Budget Task Force typically disbands at the end of the budget development process. This year, we agreed to meet again in the fall to discuss additional cost-saving measures and/or revenue-generating ideas. To that end, a Budget Discussion portal has been created on the intranet and we are requesting employees take the time to offer suggestions. Use the generic staff access codes to access this portal.

The Budget Task Force will meet on Friday, October 10<sup>th</sup> to review your contributions.

## Purchasing Coordinator change

Rose Bilou will be leaving the college July 22<sup>nd</sup> to take up employment in Alberta. We wish her well and will miss her contributions to the College. Until this vacancy is filled, Earla Peden will be returning to help us out.

Thank you Earla!

## House Poles to be raised

August 4<sup>th</sup>, beginning at 11:00 am the Kitselas will be raising four house poles at the Kitselas Canyon (near Githaus). These poles have been designed and carved by instructors of the Freda Diesing School of Northwest Coast Art and their graduates. The Kitselas Band has issued an invitation to NWCC employees to attend this event.

## Communications & External Relations Dept Personnel Changes

Sarah Artis has moved to the half-time marketing position vacated when Lorrie Gowen became Manager of Continuing Education. Taking over Sarah's previous full-time position will be Dustin Quezada. Dustin comes to us from the Terrace Standard newspaper where he held the position of reporter and section editor. A graduate of Langara College, Dustin is an award winning journalist and photographer. In addition to his journalistic background he also brings event management, desktop publishing, and radio host skills and experience. Dustin has lived in Terrace for the past three years and is an active volunteer within the community. Please join us in welcoming Dustin on August 11<sup>th</sup>.

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## Update on Administrative Vacancies

Director, Human Resources - This position remains vacant and will be overseen by Diane Ready, Vice-President, Finance & Administration until a replacement is secured.

Director, Communications & External Relations - This position remains vacant and will be overseen by Debra Wall and myself.

Dean of Aboriginal Service Planning & Developmental Programs- Interviews are expected to occur the last week of July.

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## New Universities Announced

Universities, special purpose universities, polytechnic universities, Art & Design universities, institutes of technology, aboriginal institutes of technology, colleges, community colleges....it's a mysterious maze of choices and may serve to further complicate students decision-making about what institution is the best choice for them.

The purpose for such a wide array of institutions remains mystifying, and the mandates are as yet unclear. The BC College and Institutes (BCCI) has been requesting mandate clarity for some years; with the announcement of new universities, our efforts were intensified. Last month we received a letter from the Minister clarifying the mandate of colleges - see attached. While Minister Coell's letter is reassuring; the plethora of new universities, many of which continue to offer college programming, is not.

JUN 11 2008



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Our Ref. 62929

Ms. Penelope Denton  
Chair of the Board  
Northwest Community College  
5331 McConnell Ave  
Terrace BC V8G 4X2

Dear Ms. Denton:

I am writing to express my appreciation for the vital role community colleges play in the public post-secondary education system in British Columbia and to reaffirm the mandate of the college sector.

Government recognizes that comprehensive course offerings allow colleges to respond to the workforce needs of its community and the specific social and cultural needs of its students. The diversity of programs – from Adult Basic Education and foundation training through to applied baccalaureate programs – provides relevant opportunities and many pathways to employment or further education.

These contributions are particularly crucial in the context of current and future skill shortages. Colleges and institutes are the primary supplier of skilled workers for our economy. An estimated 42 percent of skills shortages are in occupations that require college or apprenticeship training.

The community colleges of British Columbia are mandated to:

- Provide education and training to all who choose to attend a community college at any point in their adult life;
- Focus on teaching-intensive activities using state of the art pedagogical practices that reflect the experiences, culture and social context of their students;
- Design and offer programs and courses that reflect the current and emerging needs of business and industry, and the needs of the province's society in general;
- Graduate students whose knowledge and skills satisfy employers and institutions that receive them as transfer students; and,
- Work with local groups and organizations to promote the continuous growth and development of the local community.



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Within this context, community colleges are mandated to offer programs in the following categories:

- Para-professional, career, technical and applied studies;
- Trades and apprenticeship;
- Developmental education, including programs for students with disabilities;
- Undergraduate degree programs in applied areas; and,
- University transfer studies and associate degree programs.

As conveyed in the 2008/09 Government Letter of Expectations, the Ministry and institutions will work together to further clarify details on each institution's mandate by the end of the 2008/09 fiscal year.

Thank you once more for your contribution to the success of the community college sector in British Columbia.

Sincerely,



Murray Coell  
Minister of Advanced Education

pc: Ms. Stephanie Forsyth, President  
Northwest Community College

Dr. Moura Quayle, Deputy Minister  
Ministry of Advanced Education

Mr. Jim Reed, President  
British Columbia Colleges and Institutes

Ms. Dawn Minty, Director  
Colleges and University College Branch  
Ministry of Advanced Education