

**Presentation to B.C Legislative Standing
Committee on Finance and Government Services**

9:20 am October 5, 2010 Prince George

Good morning. My name is

Our College currently provides about 60 different programs leading to a certificate, diploma or degree. in B.C. In 2010/11, we enrolled a total of over 4,000 full-time equivalent students or approximately 10,000 individuals.

At our institution we are justifiably proud of our progress. Over the past several years we have:

- Responded quickly and comprehensively to the economic recession by reallocating resources to programs and communities where needs were greatest;
- Assisted hundreds of recently displaced workers to upgrade and retrain for new employment;
- Grown and diversified our smaller campuses to serve 87 percent more students since 2005;
- Increased the enrolment and participation of Aboriginal learners by 33 percent in regular credit programs since 2005, and by over 80 percent in all program and service areas;
- More than doubled since 2005, the number of trades apprenticeship and foundation level training student spaces delivered from under 800 to over 1700 last year;
- Increased health-related training provided within the region including expanded Registered Nursing, Practical Nurse, and Health Care Assistant training; and,
- Graduated the first students from the new Medical Laboratory Technology program, and next year we will enroll the first class of students in a new Medical Radiography Technology program.

Our college is working closely with industry, First Nations and other educational institutions in addressing labour market requirements in the Central Interior and across the North. A few of the many collaborative and partnership initiatives we are leading currently include:

- Development of new Mining-related training opportunities a

Priority Budget and Policy Issues

1. The Skills Gap and College Capacity

As we all know, Canada is facing a looming skills gap, and as the baby boomers begin to retire in droves, we will need to recruit more workers, including those from traditionally under-represented groups and arm them with advanced skills for employment.

Just two short years ago the government was identifying the provincial skills gap at approximately 300,000 people by 2015, and the Conference Board of Canada has predicted a shortage of 150,000 trades people in BC over the next decade.

Increased demand for training brought on by the economic recession has put increased pressure on us. At CNC, in each of the past two years we have seen about 400 more prospective students apply for admission to programs at our Prince George Campus (that is about a 20% increase over 2008 application levels).

Unfortunately, this year many of those additional applicants could not be accommodated because most of our programs have reached their enrolment capacities and our current resources did not enable us to create many new spaces. As more people turn to colleges for training or re-training, our college faces both physical and financial capacity challenges that limits our ability to serve our communities.

2. Aboriginal Education

Aboriginal citizens make up a large and growing segment of our regional population (13% of the population and 18,000 individuals in 2006). The 21 First Nations communities in our college catchment area need and want to increase participation and successful completion of post-secondary education and training programs. The largest proportion of these potential students will be interested in the programs and services offered by the college system.

I am sure that we will all agree, it is critical that many more Aboriginal learners succeed in post-secondary education and contribute to the economic and social health of their communities and the province as a whole.

3. Annual Capital Allowance

In 2009, CNC received a major capital funding commitment totaling nearly \$30 million under the 2009-2010 budget for the construction of a new Technical Education Centre here in Prince George and for the completion of the Phase II expansion of our campus in Quesnel. These new and expanded facilities will greatly enhance our capacity to deliver high priority programming.

However, the existing facilities, which were built in the 1960s and 1970s -- 30 to 40 years later -- reaching the stage where significant maintenance and improvements are needed. During the past year we completed an inventory of repairs, upgrades and energy conservation projects that we believe will be required over the next five years. We estimate that the total cost for those projects is approximately \$10,000,000.

