

EDUCATION

As going gets tough, more return to school

Enrolment at Penticton campus of Okanagan College up by 13.4%

By Penticton Herald Staff
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Enrolment at the Penticton campus of Okanagan College has jumped by 13.4 per cent, climbing to 558 students from 492 a year ago.

College spokesman Allan Coyle said Wednesday much of the increase is due to the introduction of second-year instruction in the human kinetics program. Its 31 students are almost double the number from a year ago.

The two-year diploma program can lead to careers in physical education, kinesiology or human kinetics.

Growth in the academic and business program (to 307 students) and adult basic education has also contributed, Coyle said.

With jobs increasingly hard to find in the midst of the economic downturn, Coyle said a lot of students have opted to upgrade their education and skills by attending OK College.

"The unemployment level points to an increasing number of students who are probably in exactly that position," he said.

"People are looking at a softening job market and realizing that this is probably as good a time as any to upgrade their training and skills for when the turnaround comes."

Other newly introduced programs, such as criminal and social justice, have also boosted interest in the Penticton campus, Coyle said. Interest remains strong in the trades and practical nursing programs.

Meanwhile, site preparation has begun for the college campus expansion in Penticton.

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Construction is to start next month. Federal and provincial funding for

the \$28-million Centre of Excellence was announced in April, and a fundraising campaign for the \$5-million local share of the costs is underway.

An open house to update the public on the expansion plans is

scheduled for Oct. 9.

Enrolment at Okanagan College in Kelowna has increased by 3.8 per cent over last fall. The Vernon campus has seen an 11.2 per cent increase, while Salmon Arm is up by 3.5 per cent.