



WHAT'S NEXT IS WHAT'S HERE

## Okanagan College Aboriginal Access and Services

# Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 2

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Student Centre) on the Salmon Arm Campus of Okanagan College.

A proposal was put forth to the Ministry of Advanced Education for funding to build a new Gathering Place on-campus the successful result of which was a grant in the sum of \$253,000.00.

While making the announcement at a ceremony held in Salmon Arm on January 25, 2008 that Okanagan College received funding to undertake an Aboriginal Nursing Strategies research project, the honorable Minister of Health, George Abbott also announced on behalf of the Ministry of Advanced Education, that Okanagan College would be receiving funding to build a long-awaited Aboriginal Student Gathering Place in Salmon Arm.

No such place has existed on the Salmon Arm campus despite the presence of Aboriginal Student Centres on every other campus.

Several Aboriginal Community leaders were on hand to take part in the event held in the Salmon Campus cafeteria.



L to R: Eldon Clairmont, President, Salmon Arm Métis Association, Jim Hamilton, President, Okanagan College, Chief Felix Arnouse, Little Shuswap Indian Band, Angie March, Okanagan College Board of Governors, Perry Cormier, Councilor, Spallumcheen Indian Band, Minister George Abbott, B.C. Minister of Health, Lawrence Lee, Councilor, Spallumcheen Indian Band and Lynda Wilson, Dean, Shuswap Revelstoke Region.

### New Aboriginal Student Gathering Place

It is with great pleasure that Okanagan College announces that it will be building a new Aboriginal Student Gathering Place (Aboriginal



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It will provide a space for Aboriginal students to gather, to complete assignments, use computers or talk with the local Aboriginal Mentor, Caroline Chartier, who, as luck would have it, will finally have her very own office!

The development of the gathering place is in response to ensuring that each campus of Okanagan College provides equitable services to all of its Aboriginal students.

Plans are already underway to determine the basic structure of the new gathering place which will most likely be built as an addition to the existing cafeteria and student lounge building on the Salmon Arm campus.

Aboriginal communities and service providers of the Shuswap Region will be consulted by Okanagan College to ensure that they take part, in some form or fashion, in the gathering place's design and decoration.

## Aboriginal Nursing Strategies Project

At a ceremony held on the Salmon Arm Campus on January 25, 2008 it was announced by the honorable Minister of Health, George Abbot, that Okanagan College has received funding to undertake an Aboriginal Nursing Strategies research project. The amount of funding received was \$49,000.00.

The Okanagan College catchment area has an Aboriginal population of over 12,000. Despite this sizeable population, commonly held belief suggests that there are very few Aboriginals working in the nursing field.

This lack of Aboriginal presence in our health care facilities not only represents a gross imbalance, but deprives Aboriginal patients of contact with health care professionals from their own community.



Further, the absence of Aboriginal nurses mean that young Aboriginal graduates have no role models to encourage involvement in nursing or demonstrate that health care is a viable, available career route for young Aboriginal men and women.

Okanagan College, in conjunction with the education and health leaders in Aboriginal

communities from the Okanagan-Shuswap regions, which includes 10 First Nation bands and numerous Aboriginal service providers/organizations, will research the underlying reasons for the presumed shortage of Aboriginal nurses in the Okanagan and Shuswap region's health care facilities, as well as to determine the academic profiles of potential nursing students, the barriers they face accessing nursing programs and to determine what facilitated the success of practicing Aboriginal nurses.

The results of the project will include the creation a task force to identify the need for a comprehensive access program of academic and personal supports to prepare potential Aboriginal nursing candidates to enter and succeed in existing nursing programs.

## Shuswap Nation Bursary

In order to make education more accessible and affordable for its Aboriginal students, the College offers a number of bursaries specific to Aboriginal students.



A bursary is an award usually based on financial need, whereas a scholarship is an award usually based on academic achievement.

The College is pleased to announce that we now offer a bursary specific to our Shuswap Nation students.

For more information on the Okanagan College Shuswap Nation Students Bursary please check out our website at:

[http://www.okanagan.bc.ca/administration/students/aboriginal/Scholarships\\_Bursaries\\_and\\_Awards.html](http://www.okanagan.bc.ca/administration/students/aboriginal/Scholarships_Bursaries_and_Awards.html) or call your local campus Aboriginal Mentor.

## New Aboriginal Mentor for Penticton

The role of the Aboriginal mentor is to assist in providing educational support to, and act as a primary resource for, Aboriginal students at each campus.

They assist Aboriginal students in accessing information about College programs, courses and support services, help Aboriginal students navigate the post-secondary education system, function as advocates, assist Aboriginal students in awareness of services available from local Aboriginal communities, assist in the organization of events at the College for prospective Aboriginal students, and function as contacts with Aboriginal Bands regarding individual students and their transition to the College.

The importance of the Mentor cannot be underestimated, and it is with this in mind that the College has hired Robert (Bob) Searle as the new Aboriginal Mentor for the Penticton campus.

Bob is of Metis Cree-Saulteaux ancestry, born in Wells, BC and attended public school in Williams Lake. He graduated from grade 13 in Vancouver, later attended SFU as a charter student with a B.Ed in education and geography major, and completed his formal education at UBC with an M.Ed in Educational



Administration. He started his teaching career in Kamloops, went on to work with INAC in Prince George as Assistant Superintendent of Education, and completed his full-time working career as principal at Nkwala Elementary School in School District #67 (Okanagan-Skaha/Penticton). Currently he works 2-3 months each year as a Supervisor with UBC-Okanagan in the Education Faculty guiding 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year students in completion of their required teaching practica in the South Okanagan. Bob has spent several fulfilling years working with Aboriginal learners and First Nations focus groups, and is committed to enhancing educational opportunities for students of all ages.

## Potential Environmental Management Program

Okanagan College is in the process of determining the need for a new Environmental Management Program for Aboriginal learners.

The process is being led by Dr. Leif Burge, Dr. Ann McKinnon, and Bonnie Watts.

The purpose of this project is hopefully to one day develop new certificate, diploma, associate degree, and applied degree programs in environmental management at Okanagan College for Aboriginal learners.

The proposed program will provide Aboriginal learners the skills required to manage the environment. It will teach students about many aspects of the environment and give them the skills necessary to obtain meaningful employment. Key for the program's development will be the opportunities to have a number of entrance and exit points as well as laddering opportunities.

The determination of the need for such a program is currently being completed in consultation with the First Nations Lands Advisory Board.

## Important Dates For Winter 2007

January 2-18: Late Registration Period

January 7: Classes begin for Business, CIS, Commercial Aviation, Arts/Science, Engineering Technology, and Advanced Culinary Arts Diploma

January 18: Last day to register in a course for the winter semester

January 18: Last day to receive a tuition rebate for withdrawal from a winter semester course

January 18: Last day to withdraw without record of course resignation entered on the student's transcript for a winter semester course

January 18: Last day to submit a waiver or an addition to the Medical and Dental Plan. Forms to be submitted to Student Association offices by 4:00pm

January 12: Winter convocation

January 25: Last day to submit grade appeals to Registrar's Office for Fall semester. Submission and fee must be received by the Registrar – deadline 4:00pm

February 18-22: Study break for Adult Academic and Career Preparation students in Revelstoke, Salmon Arm, Vernon, Kelowna and Penticton, and for Adult Special Education students in Kelowna, Vernon and Salmon Arm



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February 18-22: Mid-semester study week for degree, diploma, and daytime ESL programs students

February 29: Last day to change from credit to audit for winter semester courses

February 29: Last day to withdraw, without penalty, from winter semester courses

March 20-23: Mid-semester study week for Adult Special Education students in Penticton

March 21: Good Friday: Okanagan College closed

March 24: Easter Monday: Okanagan College closed

**Shuswap Nation Tribal Council:**

<http://www.shuswapnation.org/>

## Aboriginal Access and Services Contact Information

**James Coble**

**Aboriginal Access and Services Coordinator**

Okanagan College, Kelowna

Office: S124A

Hours: Monday to Friday, 8:00 – 4:00

Tel: 250.762.5445 ext. 4322

Fax: 250.862.5496

Email: [jcoble@okanagan.bc.ca](mailto:jcoble@okanagan.bc.ca)

**Ethan Baptiste**

**Aboriginal Mentor**

Okanagan College, Kelowna

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**Robert Searle**

**Aboriginal Mentor**

Okanagan College, Penticton

Office: A1E Sunoka Building

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Tel: 250.492.4305 ext. 3261

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**Marilyn Alexis**

**Educational Advisor, Aboriginal Mentor**

Okanagan College, Vernon

Office: A306 (Wed.), D220 (Tues. & Thurs.)

Hours: Tuesday to Thursday, 8:30 – 4:30

Tel: 250.545.7291 ext. 2209 (Wed.) ext. 2284

(Tues. & Thurs.)

Email: [malexis@okanagan.bc.ca](mailto:malexis@okanagan.bc.ca)

**Caroline Chartier**

**Aboriginal Mentor**

Okanagan College, Salmon Arm

Office: 121

Hours: Thursday 8:30am – 4:00pm

Tel: 250.832.2126 ext. 8237

Email: [cchartier@okanagan.bc.ca](mailto:cchartier@okanagan.bc.ca)

## Upcoming Events!!!

### Seeing Ourselves in the Mirror: Giving Life to Learning – 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual National Conference 2008

It is a conference for all people who are committed to improving learning for Aboriginal learners

Join us as we gather to share knowledge about holistic learning practices and showcase promising practices that support learning in all the stages of life.

The event will be held at the Westin Bayshore in downtown Vancouver, British Columbia, February 28, 29 & March 1, 2008.

For more information please contact 604.925.6087 or [conference@fnesc.ca](mailto:conference@fnesc.ca)

## Websites of Interest

**Okanagan College Aboriginal Programs and Services Webpage:**

<http://www.okanagan.bc.ca/administration/students/aboriginal.html>

**Aboriginal Funding Tool:**

<http://www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca/acp/apps/fundingtool.nsf/>