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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
2020AEST0013-000323  
Feb. 25, 2020

Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training

### **Celebrating the role B.C.'s colleges play in student success**

VICTORIA – BC Colleges and the Province are celebrating the fourth-annual BC Colleges Day, honouring the educators, staff, boards and administrators who are valued parts of the public post-secondary ecosystem.

“The vital role of public colleges is felt across British Columbia,” said Melanie Mark, Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Training. “Colleges are creating economic opportunities and employment in every corner of the province and are leading the way by delivering dynamic and diverse academic, trades and vocational programs close to home. Through applied research and technical innovation, they are building the foundations of a thriving and successful B.C.”

Presidents of the 10 members of BC Colleges association gathered in Victoria to recognize the accomplishments of their students. For more than 50 years, B.C.’s 11 colleges have been vital community hubs throughout the province. These colleges deliver over 250 programs to more than 125,000 students annually through campuses and learning centres in 60 communities.

“Colleges serve people and communities throughout B.C. with a wide range of programs,” said Sherri Bell, chair of BC Colleges and president of Camosun College. “BC Colleges Day celebrates the life-changing education and training that is helping create, build and maintain a thriving, healthy and vibrant British Columbia.”

Indigenous students account for about 10% of the student population in the college system. At the 10 colleges in the BC Colleges association, there were 10,720 learners self-identified as Indigenous in the 2017-18 academic year, according to the ministry’s central data warehouse.

“British Columbia’s colleges are working in collaboration with Indigenous leaders and students, governments, industry, communities and other partners to deliver on the UN Declaration and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action for education and training,” Bell said. “Colleges are implementing programs and services to support true and lasting reconciliation.”

In every corner of the province, there are stories of student success made possible by studying at B.C.’s colleges. As part of this year’s BC Colleges Day celebrations, some of these successes have been captured in a handbook. Read more online:

<https://www.bccolleges.ca/news/posts/bc-colleges-day-2020>

“I always tell people to write down what they want for their own life,” said Holly West, a member of the Takla Lake First Nation and recent College of New Caledonia (CNC) graduate in accounting and finance. “In the end, you have to ask yourself what you want to change and what you want to get out of that. I found many answers to those questions at CNC.”

The recently released Good Jobs Guide notes that 77% of the 860,000 jobs expected in the next

decade will require post-secondary education. To make post-secondary education more accessible and affordable for B.C. students, Budget 2020 provides \$24 million over three years for the new B.C. Access Grant. Over 40,000 low- to middle-income students will be eligible for up-front grants of up to \$4,000 starting in September 2020.

**Learn More:**

BC Colleges is an association representing 10 of the 11 public post-secondary colleges in the province: <http://www.bccolleges.ca>

**Contacts:**

Jennifer Fernandes  
Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and  
Training  
jennifer.fernandes@gov.bc.ca  
250 952-6400

Lori Elder  
BC Colleges  
lori@bccolleges.ca  
250 812-8209

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