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NIC Employee Receives National Honour

Albert Balbon, North Island College's Supervisor of Distributed Learning, was awarded the 2009-2010 Association of Canadian Community College's (ACCC) Bronze Staff Excellence Award on Sunday, June 6th at the ACCC National Conference in Niagara Falls, Ontario.

The ACCC's Staff Excellence Award recognizes individual staff members who have made an exceptional contribution within their institution and within the community it serves. It rewards employees who define excellence in their job performance, their influence, and ultimately their commitment to student learning.

Kevin Walters, Director, Information Technology Services was instrumental in nominating Balbon for this award. "The application process was extensive," Walters remarks. "But what struck me in putting it together were the testimonials from the staff, faculty and students Albert has worked with. How many there were and how quickly people responded to our request for comments is the real testament of Albert's impact and commitment to the college. It was truly amazing and really speaks to what he has accomplished here."



NIC's Supervisor of Distributed Learning, Albert Balbon, has received the 2009 - 2010 ACCC Bronze Staff Excellence Award.

To serve such a large geographical region, NIC has always required creative solutions. Balbon pioneered NIC's extension into online learning from its origin as a paper-based distance post-secondary institution. His early technical support for courses delivered by satellite uplinks has evolved into a sophisticated interactive television classroom experience, known as ITV.

Fully produced interactive television classrooms are linked together in an immersive experience leaving the instructor completely free to focus on teaching the students in the multiple classrooms. "This has been the most successful ongoing classroom video conferencing service we are aware of, regularly video conferencing up to 55 hours of classroom instruction per week for over 16 years." states Walters.

Balbon was recently given the exciting news. "It felt very good," he says. "Time goes by quickly, it's so easy to get distracted by how busy you are. This has forced me to step back and actually see what I've done and who I have impacted. It's been a very positive experience." Balbon's passion and forward thinking seem to be never ending. He is currently focusing his energy making website content specific to distance learners accessible via cell phones and iPods. "I want the students to have seamless access to materials," remarks Balbon. "I want students to be more connected with the methods they use to communicate."

Albert Balbon has provided creativity through his technical leadership to the College for nearly 25 years. He is a provincially recognized leader in the area of Distributed Learning Technology. In 2006, he was awarded the BC Innovation Awards in Educational Technology for his many years of support for Distance Education at North Island College. He is a sought after expert in Instructional Technology and the college and community continue to benefit from his skill and enthusiasm.

The Association of Canadian Community Colleges is the national, voluntary membership organization created in 1972 to represent colleges and institutes to government, business and industry, both in Canada and internationally. As part of its mandate, ACCC organizes conferences and workshops for college staff, students and Board members to facilitate networking and participation in national and international activities such as sector studies, awards programs and linkages.

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Media relations contact:

Susan Auchterlonie

Director, College & Community Relations
(250) 334-5271