
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2017AVED0048-001130
April 7, 2017

Ministry of Advanced Education

Raising awareness of co-op education on Vancouver Island

VICTORIA – Students at colleges and universities on Vancouver Island will be encouraged to explore co-op opportunities to support their career ambitions.

Four public post-secondary institutions will each receive \$75,000. The funding will support outreach to more employers and increase awareness of the benefits of co-op placements for both employers and students. The institutions are:

- Camosun College
- North Island College (NIC)
- University of Victoria
- Vancouver Island University (VIU)

Programming in co-op education combines academic studies with paid work experience in career-related fields. Co-op students have opportunities to apply their learning, gain employment-related skills and make connections with employers. This experience better prepares students for entry into the workforce.

Employers benefit from the energy, fresh ideas, knowledge and skills of co-op students. Co-op placements also provide employers with the opportunity to assess new talent for recruitment after graduation.

The funding announced today builds on a \$1.3-million investment in co-op education in 2015-16 for a total investment of \$2.6 million.

Government support for co-operative education aligns with commitments in the BC Jobs Plan, #BCTECH Strategy and B.C.'s Skills for Jobs Blueprint. Co-op programs are offered across many sectors, including programs that lead to a range of occupations needed in the technology sector.

The #BCTECH Strategy is a key component of the BC Jobs Plan to support the growth of British Columbia's vibrant technology sector and strengthens B.C.'s diverse innovation economy. The multi-year strategy includes a \$100-million #BCTECH Fund and initiatives to increase talent development through more tech-related grads, co-ops and coding, as well as data innovation and market access for tech companies to drive innovation and productivity throughout the province.

Quotes:

Michelle Stilwell, MLA for Parksville-Qualicum –

“Co-op programs allow students to apply classroom learning while exploring different career opportunities with employers in their communities. This funding will help Vancouver Island University support students as they prepare to find success in the workforce.”

Don McRae, MLA for Comox Valley –

“The \$75,000 for North Island College will ensure that students can continue to make important connections with local employers. Through co-op experiences, students are able to build on their resumes while developing valuable workplace skills.”

Sherri Bell, Camosun College president –

“Camosun College is a provincial leader in co-op education. For the 10th year in a row, a Camosun co-op student has been named the ACE BC Co-op Student of the Year, and over 30 academic programs at Camosun offer a co-op work experience component. Co-op education options not only provide our students with the opportunity to apply their academic knowledge to real-life challenges, they allow students to make important industry career connections, and provide employers with trained, enthusiastic workers, ready to make positive contributions in their workplace.”

John Bowman, North Island College president –

“Co-op education improves student experiences and success, and is a key priority in NIC’s strategic plan. The \$75,000 announced today enables students to take part in workplace-based and experiential learning that helps them meet employers, explore their career goals, build confidence and earn money in their chosen field.”

Jamie Cassels, University of Victoria president –

“We truly value the opportunities that this additional funding will provide for our students. Work integrated learning is enormously enriching. It allows students to experience the meaning, application and relevance of their learning in a hands-on fashion. It motivates further learning and leads students to discover relevant pathways for their future, while building bridges with the community and mobilizing education for the benefit of society. Additionally, it often leads to a first job and a career.”

Ralph Nilson, Vancouver Island University president –

“Through VIU’s Centre for Experiential Learning, the university’s students have access to valuable co-op learning opportunities, which give them work integrated learning experiences in a variety of careers and help them to build networks before they graduate. This funding will support VIU to provide and expand these important learning opportunities.”

Quick Facts:

- There will be nearly one million job openings in B.C. through to 2025.
- Approximately 42% of job openings will require college education or apprenticeship training.
- 36% will require university and/or significant work experience.
- 18% will require high school and/or occupation-specific training.

Learn More:

- The Association for Co-operative Education BC/Yukon: <http://www.co-op.bc.ca/>
- BC Jobs Plan: <http://engage.gov.bc.ca/bcjobsplan/>
- #BCTECH Strategy: <https://bctechstrategy.gov.bc.ca/>
- BC's Skills for Jobs Blueprint: https://www.workbc.ca/getmedia/4c54646a-93fa-4566-b148-f43a3f27b240/Booklet_BCBlueprint_web_140428.pdf.aspx

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