

MEDIA RELEASE

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NIC students to train at Disney World

Two NIC students will be spending their co-ops at Disney World as part of the Disney International's Academic Exchange program.

NIC is one of six post-secondary institutions across Canada to offer the six-month program, a partnership between NIC and University of California, Riverside. It is designed for exceptional students pursuing careers in international tourism, hospitality management and business. Students spend two weeks in California and then move to supervised, paid training at Walt Disney World Resort, Florida.

"The Academic Exchange program with Disney provides students with a unique, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," said Anita Budisa-Bonneau, NIC's coordinator, work integrated education. "All the students who have participated in the past have said how invaluable the experience has been, both in terms of the learning opportunities and being able to connect and network with people from around the world."

This year, Disney accepted NIC tourism and hospitality management student Hiroki Asai as the Character Performer Goofy while NIC business student Amissa Funk will work in merchandising and on the attractions.

"I was looking for a unique experience, something to really set me apart when I'm done school," said Funk. "I know Disney is recognized for its customer service and I want to learn more about that. I'm also excited to be a part of the Disney culture, that idea that we're all Disney, no matter what job you're doing."

For Asai, the opportunity to play a costumed character was the chance of a lifetime and he wants to learn all he can while working in Florida. "Disney is known for its hospitality management and leadership system and I'm hoping to learn as much as I can from them," said Asai. "I'm also looking forward to the opportunity to meet people from all over the world, network, and develop international relationships."

The students will leave at the end of June and return to the Comox Valley at the end of the year. They are planning to document the experience online through social media.

The exchange program is one of many work-integrated learning opportunities available to NIC students, which support student success through networking and hands-on learning.

Visit www.nic.bc.ca/coop for more information on co-op and internship opportunities at NIC.

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NIC business student Amissa Funk and tourism and hospitality student Hiroki Asai will spend six months at Disney as part of an internship program with Disney International.