



# President's Newsletter

FEBRUARY 28, 2019

Dear Colleagues,

Winter 2019 is proving itself a time of renewal and planning at NIC. While construction and renovation at the Campbell River campus nears completion, several other projects are just beginning.

From the release of the BC budget and its implications for NIC, to on-campus housing, international education and the launch of the College Plan20-25 development process, there is much to share.

I want to thank everyone for their work on these initiatives as well as those who make NIC's day-to-day operations run smoothly and effectively for students.

Please take time to read this newsletter and join me at an upcoming President's Town Hall meeting. These informal meetings are an opportunity to learn more about these and other exciting NIC initiatives.

The meetings are scheduled on the following dates:

## President's Town Hall Meetings

**Monday, March 4 | 12 - 1 pm**  
Port Alberni Campus, CEN 211

**Wednesday, March 6 | 12 - 1 pm**  
Campbell River Campus, C227

**Thursday, March 7 | 12 - 1 pm**  
Comox Valley Campus, Stan Hagen Theatre

Sincerely,

John Bowman  
[john.bowman@nic.bc.ca](mailto:john.bowman@nic.bc.ca)

## Provincial Government Budget 2019

On February 19, 2019, the BC government tabled its [Budget 2019](#), which included several important items for NIC students, employees and the BC post-secondary system. They include eliminating student loan interest payments, more funding for adult basic education, the Employer Health Tax, expanding program funding and more. What follows is a summary and their implications for the College.

### NIC Budget Implications

**Eliminating Student Loan Interest** — The budget included \$318 million to eliminate interest on the BC portion of student loans. This important initiative will improve affordability and access to post-secondary education for students.

**Adult Basic Education** — Since reinstating the tuition-free policy for domestic students in Adult Basic Education courses in 2017, the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training has been providing NIC with tuition-reimbursement funding.

In Fiscal 2019/20, this funding will be built into our annual base operating grant budget. We expect to know more about our exact funding allocation in coming months.

**Access to Technology Training** — As part of the BC government's commitment to addressing the labour market needs of the growing technology sector, the College will receive funds for a new technology-related certificate program. This includes funding for 20 FTEs and \$200,000 in Fiscal 2019/20, and a further 20 FTEs and \$200,000 in Fiscal 2020/21, subject to legislative approval. Program planning is now underway to ensure the program supports our existing technology-related programs.

**Employer Health Tax** — Effective January 1, 2019, the provincial government introduced an Employer Health Tax. This new tax coincides with the elimination of Medical Service Plan premiums, which were reduced by 50% on January 1, 2018 and will be fully eliminated on January 1, 2020.

NIC is not exempt from the new tax but will receive additional funds. We expect the funding will fully offset the tax costs and we will adjust our budgets accordingly, as details become available.

**Collective Bargaining** — Faculty and staff collective agreements expire in March and June this year. Collective agreements will be funded by increases in provincial grant funding. We expect the bargained wage increases will have a neutral impact on the College's budget for Fiscal 2019/20.

### **Student Housing**

As part of the province's commitment to fund housing for rural college students, NIC is developing a business case to build single student and family housing at the Comox Valley campus. Student housing will transform campus life and help students achieve success.

We have begun to look for an architect to help strengthen our business case and develop the design, which will be built to BC's new Passive House construction standard for maximum energy efficiency. In addition, we are still evaluating two potential sites, as outlined in our Comox Valley Master Site Plan. This includes one site near the Comox Valley Aquatic Centre and another closer to Komoux Hall.

NIC has been working with students, employees and community partners to get feedback on design, operations and student-life elements. The project will need to accommodate students with a variety of housing needs in a full range of programs, from short-term trades apprenticeships to four-year degrees. Indigenization will be a key theme as Indigenous students have shared their difficulties finding culturally supportive places to call home.

Development of the business case has been guided by the Student Housing Planning and

Advisory Committee. It is currently establishing subcommittees in the following areas: Built Environment, Campus Connections, Environmental and Operations. If you are interested in joining the committee or one of its sub-groups, please contact Lisa Richard at [lisa.richard@nic.bc.ca](mailto:lisa.richard@nic.bc.ca).

We hope to obtain government approval for the project later this year.

### **College Plan20-25 Committee**

The College Plan20-25 Committee held its first two meetings in December and January to begin the process for developing the next five-year Strategic Plan.

The committee includes 50 members from all campuses, faculty, staff, students, board members and community partners. Four smaller subcommittees also held initial meetings to explore the following elements of the Plan20-25 process:

#### **Environmental Scan**

This subcommittee will provide input and advice on the development of the College Plan20-25 Environmental Scan, which is key to understanding the issues, information and trends in NIC's external and internal operating environments.

The scans are an essential foundation to determining the College's strategic priorities and goals. Read past [environmental scans and highlights](#) on our website.

#### **College Values**

The College Plan20-25 process will engage employees, students, board members and the community in an appreciative inquiry to identify an articulate our core values, the guiding ideas most important to NIC.

#### **Student and Community Engagement**

Ensuring students and community members contribute to College Plan20-25 will be key to the Plan's success. This subcommittee will review a list of potential avenues for participation and input and provide advice on the strategies and tools that enable students and community members to be involved.

### **Performance Assessment and Reporting**

This subcommittee will provide input on how the College will annually assess and report on its Plan20-25 progress, as well as other college-wide, functional and departmental plans.

### **Strategic Marketing Plan**

The Strategic Marketing Plan Advisory Committee has been established with a good cross-section of about 30 faculty, staff and administrators. The committee has already approved its terms of reference as well as its regular planning and meeting schedule.

It plans to work with the College Plan20-25 Committee, Senior Education Team and Department Chairs Working Group to develop a Strategic Marketing Plan, which will guide the College's identity and brand from 2020 to 2025.

### **International Education**

In January, 82 new international students arrived, bringing the our total number of international students to 462. The new student enrolment this winter is less than half of the 180 new students who arrived at the same time last year, which was our goal.

Overall, international enrolments are up about 12% in Fall 2018 and Winter 2019, with the majority increase related to programs at the Campbell River campus. However, our plan is for enrolment to level off next year.

The Office of Global Engagement (OGE) has been working with academic departments to develop the international component of NIC's enrolment plan for the academic year 2019/20.

**Employee opportunities** — In February, the office supported Ali Mayboudi and Sara Vipond, chairs of the Schools of Business and Fine Art and Design in travelling to Ireland to participate in the Limerick Institute of Technology's International Partner Development Week. Any employee wishing to participate in Leave for Change opportunities should watch the portal for deadlines and the application process.

**Student opportunities** — This winter activities and supports for students include drop-in study skills sessions in the Comox Valley and Campbell River for international and domestic students, as well as recreational snowshoeing and snowboarding or skiing lessons. Staff are also working with tourism students to organize NIC's first-ever, "NIC'S Got Talent" as part of their Convention and Special Events Management (THM-203) course.

### **Campbell River Campus**

The Campbell River campus expansion and renovation is making great progress.

Three of the five main additions are now complete and two additional buildings are expected to be complete for September 2019. Timberline Secondary School shops and E-Wing classrooms are in use and the Heavy Duty shop will be filled with students by September. The Aircraft Structures building is under construction, while a new campus hub, which includes a new Library and Learning Commons, a teaching kitchen and bistro, student lounge and study area will provide social and study space for students.

In addition, several renovations will transform programs and services in Campbell River. This includes a new nursing lab and newly renovated Student Services area. Renovations to Timberline's library and administration area are ahead of schedule, allowing the NIC Student Services renovation to begin earlier than planned.

Watch for the official opening celebration to be scheduled in the fall to celebrate this major accomplishment.

### **Comox Valley Student Services**

The Comox Valley Student Services area will be under renovation this spring and summer to create one unified student-focused space in Discovery Hall.

Renovations will bring Student Records and Systems, Campus Life, Recruitment and the Office of the Associate Vice President, Student Services and Registrar into one area. The design facilitates traffic between Tyee Hall and the Office of Global Engagement, using an external door. The Senior Leadership Team will approve a process for allocating the newly vacant office space in the lower level of Komoux Hall.

The project begins in April, with completion expected by late August. During construction, Student Services will move into second floor classrooms in Discovery Hall. We are making every effort to maintain service levels and minimize disruptions.

For more information, contact Kathleen Kuhnert, Associate Vice-President, Student Services and Registrar, [kathleen.kuhnert@nic.bc.ca](mailto:kathleen.kuhnert@nic.bc.ca), 250-334-5004.