



# The Confluence

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## Aboriginal ancestry to be recognized as qualification at CNC

### Editor, Confluence

CNC has received approval from the B.C. Human Rights Tribunal to implement a special program allowing the college to recognize Aboriginal ancestry as a bona fide employment qualification for specific positions.

The three areas where Aboriginal ancestry can be identified as a qualification are: employees providing direct operational, instructional or administrative service to primarily Aboriginal students; employees instructing courses where content is primarily Aboriginal and employees offering services and/or programs funded through Aboriginal-specific funding services.

"CNC has demonstrated to Aboriginal communities, especially students, that they are committed to collaborative and equitable partnerships that benefit both partners," said Marlene Erickson, CNC's Manager of Aboriginal Student Services and Senior Policy Advisor for Aboriginal Education and Services. "Students need role models and this special program allows CNC to hire Aboriginal employees who will be role models, whose culture and traditions will enrich the entire CNC community."

CNC's objective is to have about 50 Aboriginal individuals

employed in various operational, faculty and administrative positions within a five-year period. CNC is committed to achieving employment numbers that will reflect the diversity of its communities, to strengthen partnerships and to provide Aboriginal employees who will, through their involvement with the college and its students, role model success to Aboriginal learners.

"This is the start of a new era of co-operation and understanding within the entire college community and it is a big step in ensuring CNC continues to be the college of choice for Aboriginal students," said Ray Gerow, CNC's interim chair of the board of governors. "In the environment we are in today, Aboriginal people have many choices available to them, so it behooves the entire college system to ensure that we continue to be the choice for Aboriginal people, both as a place to go to further their education, and the place to go for employment."

The original application was submitted to the Human Rights Tribunal in October, 2008 and received approval in mid-December, 2009. It will be in effect until 2014.

"CNC has been a leader in Aboriginal education since the 1980s, and with this new initiative we are setting a provincial

precedent in support of employing Aboriginal people in the college sector," said CNC president John Bowman. "This is a very important step to further engaging Aboriginal communities in education. While we still have much work to do to implement this initiative, we are excited about the opportunities this new direction brings for collaboration and development."

The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) and Faculty Association (FACNC) which represent staff and faculty employees at CNC are in full support of the special program. A committee of college administrators, staff and faculty representatives is being established to develop implementation and communication strategies for the program. Non-Aboriginal employees in positions whose descriptions may be changed in the future to include the new qualification will not be impacted. Changes to qualifications for existing positions will not be implemented until those positions become vacant (i.e. the current employee leaves or the position terminates and a re-posting is required later).

"Implementing this approved qualification will allow CNC to more proactively recruit and retain Aboriginal employees across the college," said Bowman.