Economic Impact of Public Post-Secondary Education

Prince George, British Columbia

August, 2005



Prince George's Education Economy

- + Students
- + Alumni
- + Faculty and Staff
- + Visitors
- Institutional spending

\$721 million

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Primary Researcher: Tara Bogh, UNBC Co-op Student at IPG

Advisory Committee:

Kathie Scouten – Initiatives Prince George
Rob VanAdrichem – UNBC
Judy Jackson – CNC
Al Idiens – CNC
Charles Schell – UNBC
Roy Spooner – Innovation Resource Centre
Janet Morris-Reade – Downtown Prince George

This project was the result of a true community partnership, led by Initiatives Prince George. In addition to the IPG Board, President Gerry Offet and the City of Prince George, the advisory committee would like to thank Dr. Charles Jago, Ralph Troschke and the finance offices at UNBC and CNC for their advisory support and recognition of this study. The committee also thanks Downtown Prince George for coordinating the celebration of the 'education economy' in our city.

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Executive Summary:

Public post-secondary institutions in Prince George stimulate substantial economic activity. The following study has been completed in order to illustrate the economic impact of the presence of the public post-secondary institutions in the city of Prince George.

The study looks at spending in the local economy by the post-secondary institutions, their faculty and staff, students, alumni, and visitors to the campuses over the 2004/05 fiscal and academic years. The methodology for this study was determined in part by looking at other post-secondary economic impact studies, which commonly examined the same components but were most often developed by the institutions themselves to illustrate total provincial impact.

To illustrate the effect of initial spending, a multiplier of 1.51 determined by BC Stats to be appropriate for the city of Prince George was applied to the direct spending estimates of faculty and staff, students, alumni, and visitors. Because of leakages in the direct spending of the institutions, a multiplier was not applied to those spending figures.

Direct and indirect spending in the city of Prince George that can be attributed to the presence of the College of New Caledonia and the University of Northern BC is estimated to total \$721,449,510 and consists of the following:

	Direct impact	Total economic impact
Institutional spending	\$49,388,701	\$49,388,701
Faculty and staff spending	\$66,849,438	\$100,942,651
Alumni spending	\$327,457,446	\$494,460,743
Student spending	\$48,645,500	\$73,454,705
Visitor spending	\$2,121,000	\$3,202,710
Total	\$494,462,085	\$721,449,510

The findings of this report illustrate the broad impact of Prince George's public post-secondary institutions on the local economy. The intention of this study is not to compare the institutions to other industries but to illustrate the way that the institutions complement the core sectors of the economy and contribute to the development of new ones. It is through this complementary role that the institutions and the people surrounding them fuel growth and diversity in the economy. As there are countless direct and indirect impacts on the economy and the community that are beyond the scope of this study, this assessment of the impact of the College of New Caledonia and the University of Northern BC is considered to be conservative.

Introduction:

The diversity of programs available at the College of New Caledonia and the University of Northern BC offer a vast array of educational opportunities, making the city a popular education destination. The following study has been completed in order to illustrate the substantial economic impact of the presence of the public post-secondary institutions in the city of Prince George. The study will look at spending in the local economy by the post-secondary institutions, their faculty and staff, students, alumni, and visitors to the campuses over the 2004/05 fiscal and academic years.

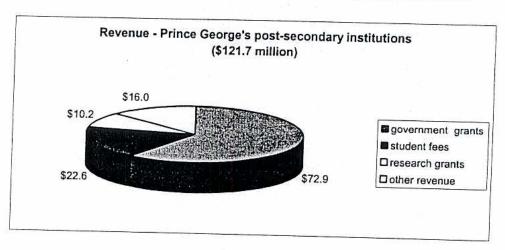
The methodology for this study was determined in part by looking at other post-secondary economic impact studies. These studies commonly examined institutional expenditures, faculty, student, alumni and visitor spending as the areas of economic impact on the communities in which the post-secondary institutions are situated. The application of an economic multiplier was also common among the studies examined.

Direct spending in the local economy creates a ripple effect, resulting in further spending in the economy. To illustrate the effect of initial spending, a multiplier of 1.51 determined by BC Stats to be appropriate for the city of Prince George will be applied to the direct spending estimates of faculty and staff, students, alumni, and visitors. A multiplier will not be applied to the direct spending of the institutions; therefore the indirect spending resulting from direct local purchasing will not be recognized. This will compensate for any leakages to outside economies.

The CNC and UNBC financial statements for the 2004/05 fiscal year provided the institutional spending figures used in the assessment. Faculty and staff spending figures were derived from the salaries expenditure in these statements, and student and alumni spending were estimated based on the number of students and alumni as of the end of the 2004/05 academic year. Due to the limitations of data availability, it was necessary to estimate certain other aspects of this study. These estimates were deliberately conservative in order to counter accidental overestimates in any areas. Furthermore, the exclusion of economic activity that was either immeasurable or beyond the scope of this study has contributed to a conservative assessment of the post-secondary economic impact in Prince George.

Post-Secondary Education attracts revenue:

Most of the funds that are spent by Prince George's post-secondary institutions originate outside of the city. For the 2004/05 fiscal year, the institutions received \$121,742,214 in the form of government grants, student fees, research grants and other revenue. This is money that would not have come into Prince George were it not for the existence of the College of New Caledonia and the University of Northern BC.



Institutional spending:

The college and the university play an important role as consumers of goods and services in the Prince George economy. In 2004/05, the institutions spent \$49,388,701 on research projects, operating supplies, scholarships, capital and other expenditures, making a substantial contribution to the local economy. The total amount of expenditures for both of the Prince George campuses has been assessed, though it is recognized that some of this spending is not with local businesses. A multiplier has not been applied to the direct spending of the institutions, so the indirect spending resulting from direct local purchasing is not recognized. This compensates for any leakages to outside economies.

	Operational supplies	Scholarships, bursaries, etc.	Capital	Othica	Total
Total	\$6,190,622			Other	expenditures
	Ψ0,130,022	\$1,864,538	\$23,910,154	\$17,423,387	\$49,388,701

Construction projects in 2004 included renovations to the newly purchased John Brink trades programs building at CNC, and a new building for the Northern Medical program and an extension to the Teaching Laboratory at UNBC. These facilities will

¹ Research project expenditures are counted within the supplies, capital and other expenditures categories.
² Scholarships are most often directly applied to the cost of tuition. As student fees have not been included in the student spending aspect of this study, including scholarships as part of institutional expenditures has not resulted in double counting of impact.

³ Capital expenditures consisting of construction projects, equipment purchases and renovations as reported in the 2004/05 financial statements.

⁴ Other expenditures consist of travel costs, non-capitalized equipment purchases, furnishings, contract services, general campus renovations, alterations and maintenance, and utilities.

allow for increased capacity as well as an improved learning environment for students, which will stimulate an increase in enrollment. In addition to the expenditures on capital projects, renovations and equipment purchases during the 2004/05 fiscal year, the institutions purchased building permits for projects totaling \$5,810,360,5 an indication of future investment in construction that will continue to stimulate activity in the local economy.

Faculty and staff spending:

Salaries and benefits for faculty and staff involved in the operational, teaching and research activities at the institutions make up the largest portion of expenditures made by the College of New Caledonia and the University of Northern BC. This institutional spending translates into spending in the local economy by faculty and staff. In 2004/05, the more than 1200 people employed by the institutions earned \$66,849,438 in income, generating a total economic impact after the multiplier effect of \$100,942,651.

	Faculty and staff	Total
	salaries & benefits	impact
Total	\$66,849,438	\$100,942,651

Student spending:

Without the existence of both the college and the university in Prince George, the local economy would not enjoy the substantial contribution made by the students. The out of town students would not come to Prince George, and the students who are from Prince George may leave the city to pursue an education elsewhere. Based on the average cost of living, including aspects such as accommodation, food, personal items and transportation, it is estimated that each student spends an average of \$8,500 in the Prince George economy during the academic year. Based on the full time equivalent enrollment for both local campuses, students spent \$48,645,500 in 2004/05. With the added multiplier, this translates into an economic impact of \$73,454,705.

	FTE students 2004/05 year	Cost of living per student	Total all students	Total
Total	5 722	The second secon		impact
Total	5,723	\$8,500	\$48,645,500	\$73,454,705

As course load is a good indication of how much of the student's presence in Prince George is attributed to the post-secondary institution they attend, full time equivalency was used in calculating the economic impact of students in the Prince George economy. Assuming that part-time students may be in Prince George for reasons other than post-secondary education, the spending of part-time students is not weighted as heavily as that of full-time students.

Refer to Appendix A.

⁵ Building permit values for April 2004 to March 2005 as reported by the City of Prince George building

Alumni contributions:

The income earned by graduates of CNC and UNBC living in Prince George has the greatest impact on the local economy. Since people have a tendency to stay and work in the area where they received their post-secondary education, the presence of both the college and the university in Prince George contributes substantially to the economy in both income and available labour force. It is known that well over half of students at UNBC originate outside of Prince George, while CNC students are more likely to be local. It is with this information that the following assumption has been made. Were it not for these institutions, the alumni who originated outside the city would likely not have come to Prince George at all, and the alumni who were from Prince George would have left the city to pursue an education elsewhere and may not have returned. For this reason, the entire income of alumni has been counted in this impact assessment.

Alumni tracking surveys indicate that depending on variables such as the program and the year of graduation, anywhere from 50 to 75% of graduates stay in Prince George to work. Making the assumption that 66% of the 13,196 CNC and UNBC graduates from the last decade have stayed and are employed in Prince George, and using 2001 census data from Stats Canada on average annual income for college and university graduates, local alumni earned \$327,457,446 in 2004. With the added multiplier, this translates into \$494,460,743 of economic impact. In addition, there are hundreds of alumni who graduated from the College of New Caledonia prior to 1994 who are not counted in this study, but who are assumed to be working in Prince George and earning an income that reflects their level of post-secondary education.

	Alumni 94/95 - 04/05	Alumni staying in PG	Total income	Total impact
Total	13,196	8,709	\$327,457,446	\$494,460,743

This assessment illustrates the capacity of the post-secondary institutions to build human capital in Prince George, and the effect this has on the economy. The presence of post-secondary institutions gives the community the ability to attract, educate and retain citizens, strengthening the economy. The skilled and educated labour force strengthens and supports all other industries in the economy, further multiplying the impact of the institutions.

It should be noted that the entire income of alumni has been considered, without a reduction for taxes. This is with the assumption that due to the large public sector presence in Prince George, any leakages from taxation come back to, and thus have an impact on, the local economy.

The graduates of Prince George's post-secondary institutions will continue to contribute substantially to the economy over the coming years. Making a conservative estimate based on the 2004/05 academic year, 1,378 people are expected to graduate yearly from the Prince George campuses. With 66% expected to stay in the area, the projected earnings contribution to the economy is an additional \$53,927,853 annually.

	Graduates per year	Graduates staying in PG	Total income	Total impact
Total	1,378	909	\$35,713,810	\$53,927,853

This estimate of future income contributions is considered to be conservative, as both institutions project an increase in annual credentials awarded, an expectation that is justified by the fact that there has been a significant increase in participation rates and highest level of educational attainment in the city of Prince George over the last decade. As a result of the availability of post-secondary education at the local level, the portion of the Prince George population with university degrees increased by 53.2% between the 1991 and 2001 censuses.

Visitor spending:

In addition to faculty, students and alumni who become permanent residents, Prince George's post-secondary institutions attract many visitors to the city. Visitors consist of groups who are looking to make use of the campus conference facilities, out of town sports teams and the friends and family of students that come to attend convocation ceremonies.

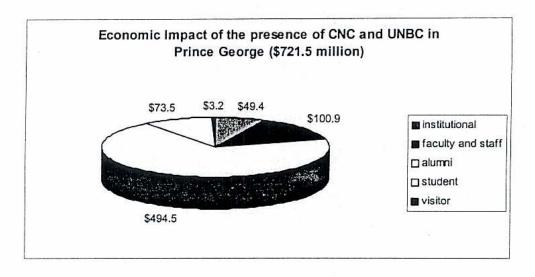
Calculated with the number of visitors and the number of nights that they stayed in Prince George, the total estimated visitors to Prince George as a result of the post-secondary institutions was 14,140 person days. Multiplied by the standard estimate of visitor spending for Prince George per day of \$150, total visitor direct economic impact is estimated to be \$2,121,000. With the added multiplier, this translates into a total economic impact of \$3,202,710.

	Conference visitors	Sports visitors	Convocation visitors	Total person days	Spending generated	Total impact
Total	12,046	438	1,656	14,140	\$2,121,000	\$3,202,710

Conclusion:

In summary, the total economic impact generated in Prince George as a result of the College of New Caledonia and the University of Northern British Columbia during the 2004/05 academic and fiscal year totaled \$721,449,510.

Institutional spending	\$49,388,701	
Faculty and staff spending	\$100,942,651	
Alumni spending	\$494,460,743	
Student spending	\$73,454,705	
Visitor spending	\$3,202,710	
Total economic impact	\$721,449,510	



There are many other ways that colleges and universities add value to their communities that are extremely difficult to measure but deserve mention. Colleges and universities, and the educated people that surround them, not only stimulate economic activity, but also contribute to the vibrancy and quality of life in the community, making it an attractive place to live and work.

The presence of post-secondary institutions in a community contributes to the attraction and retention of residents in professional careers, creating a higher income base and a larger skilled labour force. Businesses are in turn attracted to the community by the availability of skilled and educated labour. Also, many graduates who are retained in the communities where they receive their education use their acquired education and skills to start up their own businesses. This entrepreneurial activity contributes to the development of new sectors, such as the high tech sector that is growing in Prince George, with many businesses started by local graduates.

Communities benefit substantially from residents who have a post-secondary education. In Prince George, the capacity of the post-secondary institutions to train skilled trades people and medical professionals is crucial to countering potential trades shortages and ensuring the availability of quality medical care. College and university graduates earn the highest salaries, have the highest levels of workforce participation and the lowest levels of unemployment. They create the wealth that is vital to improving and sustaining the health-care system and social programs, and are less dependent on such programs. An educated population tends to take a greater interest in the arts, developing the cultural environment, which attracts more residents. In addition, families are attracted to and retained in a community in which children can pursue post-secondary education without having to move away from home.

For many reasons, colleges and universities are positive attributes for attracting an educated population to a community. The growth and stabilization of the population in turn contributes to the growth, diversification and stabilization of the economy. For this reason, this study is not a comparison of industries. Rather, it is an illustration of the way that the institutions complement the existing sectors of the economy.

⁷ Claire M. Morris and Robert Best, AUCC, notes for a presentation to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance, June 13, 2005.

Appendix A: Calculation of non-academic expenditures for students

EXPENSE	PER MONTH	ACADEMIC YEAR
ACCOMMODATION	\$507	\$4,056
FOOD	\$207	\$1,656
MISC/ PERSONAL/ENTERTAINMENT	\$208	\$1,664
TRANSPORTATION	\$140	\$1,120
TOTAL PER STUDENT		\$8,496

The estimates for accommodation, food and personal expenses were based on the BC government Student Assistant Plan estimate for per student cost of these expenses. While these BC government Student Assistance Program estimates reasonably reflected costs that would be incurred in Prince George, the BCSAP estimate for transportation costs did not. Therefore, transportation costs were estimated using a weighted average between student ridership estimates from PG transit and personal transportation cost estimates from the Financial Aid department at CNC.

Transportation expense	Cost per month	Number of students ⁹	Total monthly costs all students
bus pass ¹⁰ Total cost public transportation	\$26.25 \$26.25	1124	\$29,505
vehicle maintenance and gas ¹¹ on campus parking ¹² Total cost private vehicle	\$150 \$30 \$180	5920	\$1,065,600
Total transportation expenses Average cost with 7702 students	\$140		\$1,095,105

^{8 8} months.

⁹ Estimates on ridership provided by the City of Prince George transit department. Estimates that 1124 of the 7702 enrolled students take the bus and 90% of the remainder drive to school.

¹⁰ PG Transit bus pass \$105 per semester.

¹¹ Estimate from financial aid officer at CNC.

¹² Estimated cost for parking at UNBC.

Appendix B: Summary of aspects of other economic impact studies

Numerous economic impact studies were analyzed in preparation for this study. On the basis of this analysis, a methodology was chosen that was determined to be appropriate as it included aspects that were common to other studies.

The expenditures of the post-secondary institutions were a common aspect included in all of the economic impact assessments. These expenditures included basic operating expenditures including salaries and benefits, scholarships, capital and research. In some studies, salaries and benefits for faculty and staff were included in the impact separately as faculty and staff spending, while in others, they were included as part of the institutional expenditures, with a multiplier added. Half of the studies included research expenditures as a separate part of the assessment, while the other half left this aspect as part of overall institutional expenditures.

Of the ten studies examined, student spending was part of the impact assessment in eight. Five of the ten recognized the impact of visitors that are drawn to the community by the institutions. Half of the studies included the earnings of their alumni in the impact assessment. Of these, four included the incremental income gains from having a college or university degree, and one, the University of Lethbridge, included all alumni earnings. This was the method chosen for this study, as it is felt that the institutions are a strong tool for attraction and retention in the community and were it not for the institutions the community may have difficulty in retaining residents with post secondary education and the sectors that surround them.

Other aspects were included in some of the other studies that were not considered for this one. The added value to the community from tax revenues did not serve the objectives of this study, and it was felt that the income from retired institutional employees would become more relevant as the institutions mature.

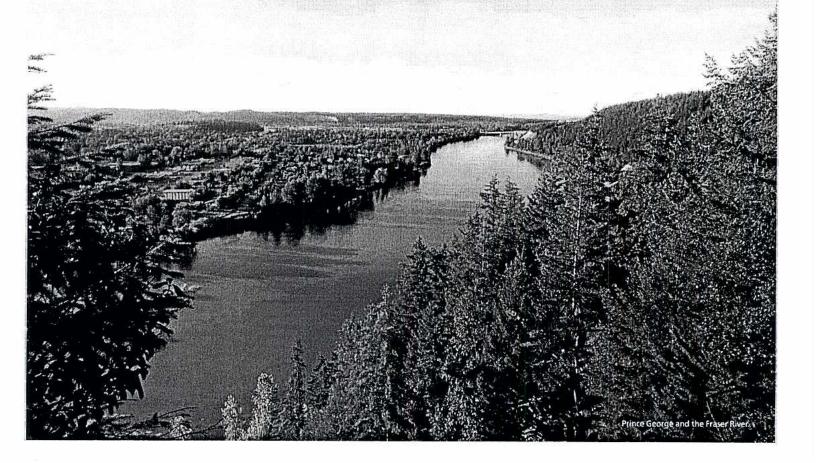
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Prince George's Education Economy

- + Students
- + Alumni
- + Faculty and Staff
- + Visitors
- Institutional spending

\$721 million



Did you know?

- CNC and UNBC employ more than 1,200 faculty and staff – most at their Prince George campuses.
- In 2004/05, more than 12,000 visitors came to CNC and UNBC for academic conferences, sports events, and graduation ceremonies.
- Local research funding (mostly from the Federal and Provincial Governments) now amounts to about \$10 million annually.
- 7,700 students attend CNC and UNBC in Prince George. That's one in every ten people, the highest per capita student population in British Columbia.
- Prince George is the smallest community in Canada to offer everything from trades certifications and diplomas to undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral degrees, and a medical program.
- Between 1991 and 2001, the number of people living in Prince George with a college or university degree increased by 53%.
- The BC Government provides \$73 million to the CNC and UNBC operating budgets.

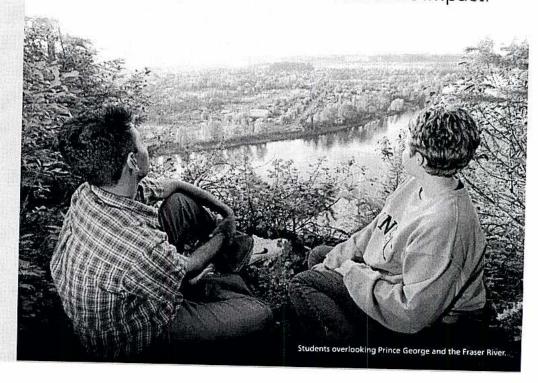
Taking the pulse of the education economy

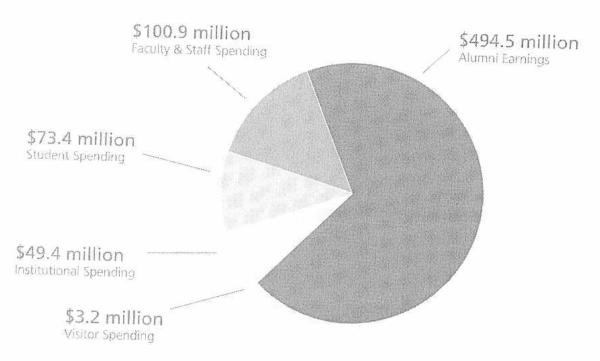
ost-secondary education breathes life into growing economies – and Prince George is a vital example. Its citizens know Prince George is changing and the impact of post-secondary education is significant and growing – but how much and why?

One way to measure the force of education is through an economic impact study. Modeled after other studies conducted across Canada and the United States in expanding rural economies, this is the first of its kind completed for Prince George and considers the spending stimulus within the city that is attributed to the presence of the College of New Caledonia and the University of Northern British Columbia.

The impacts are made up of direct institutional spending including wages and salaries, student and visitor spending, and alumni earnings. A multiplier is used to capture the total impact of initial and subsequent rounds of spending. For example, when a student buys a good or service, the supplier then spends all or part of the money earned on other goods and services. In other words, an initial dollar spent in Prince George generates more than a dollar's worth of business. Based on data from BC Stats and other post-secondary economic impact studies, a multiplier of 1.51 was determined to be appropriate for the Prince George economy.

The results are now in. Based on the 2004/05 fiscal year, public post-secondary education in Prince George generated \$721 million of total economic impact.





Economic Impact of the Presence of CNC & UNBC in Prince George \$721.4 million (2004/05)

What's in a number?

Institutional Spending

Operational supplies, scholarships and bursaries, capital expenses, renovations, and equipment purchases totaled \$49.4 million. Because some supplies and equipment (such as specialized microscopes and computers) are purchased from outside of Prince George, the 1.51 multiplier has not been applied to institutional spending.

Faculty & Staff Spending

Salaries and benefits make up the largest portion of expenditures made by CNC and UNBC. The total annual impact of faculty and staff spending after applying the multiplier is \$100.9 million.

Student Spending

The cost-of-living for a full-time student is estimated at \$8,500 annually and includes accommodation, food, personal items, transportation, and entertainment. With a full-time student enrollment of 5,723 at both local campuses, the total economic impact of student spending after applying the multiplier is \$73.4 million.

Alumni Earnings

Tracking by CNC and UNBC indicates that 50% to 75% of graduates stay in Prince George to live and work, depending on variables such as program of study and year of graduation. This study assumes that 66% of the 13,196 graduates from the last decade have stayed and are employed in the city. It does not include earnings from CNC graduates from the years before 1994. According to Statistics Canada, the average salary for college grads is \$33,618. University graduates make an average of \$44,066.

Visitor Spending

Conferences, out of town sports teams, and convocation ceremonies generated an estimated 14,140 visitor days for CNC and UNBC in 2004/05. A previous survey in Prince George has indicated that a visitor spends an average of \$150 per day for accommodation, goods and services, attractions, and food. The total economic impact of visitor spending after applying the multiplier is \$3.2 million.

Wherever possible, figures used in this study are from the 2004/05 fiscal year.

Prince George's Education Economy

"Growing businesses in Prince George see having an accredited College and a top-ranked University as a real advantage. CNC and UNBC are key considerations for people deciding to relocate to Prince George."

Sherry Sethen, Executive Director Prince George Chamber of Commerce

"With a world class University and proximity to the resource industry, Prince George was the perfect place to start our business."

Garth Frizzell, CEO Terra Cognita Software Systems Inc.

"CNC plays a major role in the training and upgrading of the construction industry's skilled workforce. My vision is to see Prince George become the 'Centre of Excellence for Trades Training in North Central British Columbia'. CNC can play a major role in this vision."

Rosalind Thorn, President Prince George Construction Association

"Prince George is a modern and well-rounded city in large part because CNC and UNBC have added greatly to our diversity. Students, faculty, and employees are all important members of our theatre audiences. We are proud supporters of a 'student-friendly' city."

Ann Laughlin Theatre NorthWest



Mark Stafford was born and raised in Prince George. He graduated with a Bachelor of Commerce degree from UNBC in 1996 and is now a branch manager at the Bank of Montreal. To date, Mark has hired more than 20 UNBC graduates.

A Strong Tomorrow for Prince George

The Impact of Education

How do you measure the wealth created when a family decides to relocate to Prince George because their children will someday be able to earn a diploma or degree without having to move to another city? What is the impact of a local graduate establishing a business in Prince George? What's it worth for Prince George to know that today's generation will have more education and earning potential than ever before?

Dollars and cents only tell part of the story of what CNC and UNBC mean for Prince George and the North. The real impacts of a strong education economy are in our bright future.

Opportunities for Education in Prince George

- Trades Certification
- Certificates
- Diplomas
- Undergraduate Degrees (Bachelor)
- Graduate Degrees (Master & Doctoral)
- Northern Medical Program (MD)
- Continuing Education



Brody Horrocks & Colin Côté completed the Pulp and Paper Operations Program at CNC this year. The program was developed with the help of several local mills, and covers industry processes, applied math and science, environmental awareness, and mechanical and technical skills.

Study Team

Primary Researcher

Tara Bogh
UNBC Co-op student (Economics)

Advisory Committee:

Kathie Scouten Initiatives Prince George

Rob van Adrichem UNBC

Judy Jackson CNC

Al Idiens CNC

Charles Schell
Director of UNBC's MBA program

Roy Spooner Innovation Resource Centre

Janet Morris-Reade Downtown Prince George

This project was the result of a true community partnership, led by Initiatives Prince George (IPG). In addition to the IPG Board, President Gerry Offet, and the City of Prince George, the advisory committee would like to thank Dr. Charles Jago, Ralph Troschke, and the finance offices at UNBC and CNC for their advisory support and endorsement of this study. The committee also thanks Downtown Prince George for coordinating the celebration of the education economy as students return for the 2005/06 academic year.

Initiatives Prince George 201-1300 1st Avenue Prince George, BC V2L2Y3 (250) 564-0282