

College of New Caledonia

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT



August 19, 2016

Mr. Bernd Walter, Chair
Human Rights Tribunal
1170 – 605 Robson Street
Vancouver, BC. V6B 5J3

Dear Chairperson Walter,

Please accept this letter as the annual report for the College of New Caledonia's Special Program to hire employees of Aboriginal ancestry. The College of New Caledonia (CNC) has faced significant challenges in the past year; however we have also implemented programs and initiatives to meet these challenges and continue to meet the needs of Aboriginal learners and communities in our region.

First, although it has been a struggle to meet overall enrolment targets, the number of Aboriginal students continues to increase and the percentage of Aboriginal students at all campuses is now 28%. The increasing numbers of Aboriginal students is also reflected in the increasing demands for programs that meet their needs and the needs of their communities. An example of this is the need for community-based programs and in 2015 CNC was successful in obtaining external funding to offer programs in numerous First Nations communities throughout our region, including remote villages such as Takla Landing and Tsay Keh Dene. The Canada Jobs Grant alone provided almost three million dollars in funding to provide programs in six First Nations communities.

Next, in the fall the College established a committee to begin consultations to develop a new Strategic Plan for 2016 – 2021. In preliminary discussions with Aboriginal Advisory members we made it clear that Aboriginal education will be embedded in this Plan along with key performance indicators. As well, a complementary Education Plan and an Aboriginal Strategic Plan will be developed to ensure Strategic Plan goals are addressed and implemented over the next five years. In particular, the Education Plan will ensure that every department at CNC is accountable for contributing to achieving the goals set out for Aboriginal education.

A significant challenge CNC faced last fiscal year was addressing a large budget deficit and numerous community meetings took place throughout the spring and fall to address community concerns. Measures taken included temporarily not filling positions and very few new positions were created which severely limited our ability to apply the Special Program process to new hires.

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We are pleased to report that a new position created for the Nechako campus which includes Fort St James and Vanderhoof has been approved to be posted under the Special Program criteria. Since 2008 the percentage of Aboriginal students in Fort St James has increased from 65 to 77% and the Vanderhoof campus from 28 to 54%. We are confident we can find a qualified Aboriginal applicant to fill the Associate Regional Principal position who will be a role model for all Aboriginal students at CNC.

As well, the College continues to celebrate Aboriginal cultures on campus and to integrate Indigenous Knowledge into various classrooms. In March CNC's Culture Days drew participants from the entire community, including some elementary schools¹. Other key events included engaging the college community to learn about residential school history by acknowledging Orange Shirt Day².

Finally, the College continues to work with Aboriginal Advisories and partners throughout the region to find ways to meet the communities' needs for capacity building and for training to participate in the pending Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) industry. Several First Nations communities have received direct funding for LNG-related training and they have chosen CNC to provide this³.

The aforementioned initiatives have poised the College to focus on meeting the targets established for the Human Rights Special Program to 2019. We are confident our strong relationships with Aboriginal partners will increase the number of programs we can provide to meet community needs and these in turn will increase the numbers of Aboriginal employees at CNC. We remain committed to working with the Human Rights Special Program Steering Committee to achieve our long-term goal of having Aboriginal employees working in all departments at CNC and being reflective of the numbers of the Aboriginal population in northern BC.

Sincerely,



Henry Reiser
President

cc Lily Bachand, President CUPE Local 4951
Deborah Collette, President CNC Faculty Association
Marlene Erickson, CNC Director Aboriginal Education
Kim Swarts, CNC Human Resources Advisor
Jason Fisher, Chair CNC Board of Governors
Ben Berland, Chair Yinka Dene Council

¹ Aboriginal Culture Days at CNC. <http://www.250news.com/2015/03/12/aboriginal-culture-days-at-cnc/>

² CNC Staff & Students Honour Orange Shirt Day.

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10156154771120253&set=pcb.10156154779245253&type=3&theater>

³ Bridging to Trades program in partners four First Nations with with College of New Caledonia. This initiative by the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation commits up to \$30M in funding from 2015-18 for Aboriginal Skills Training Development. See

<http://www.cftktv.com/News/story.aspx?ID=2189513>