

Introduction to Education Seminar: Special Program Communications

Community colleges were designed for inclusiveness and access for all Canadians.

Opening up access to groups who have historically faced systemic barriers to post-secondary education was the foundation for community colleges across Canada. The principle of access gave rise to alternative entrance opportunities and life-long learning, prior learning assessment, inclusive curricula/classrooms and affordable costs.

At the same time, unions have long been champions of workers' rights in virtually every aspect of employment, including diversity. In 2009 CUPE (national) was honored with a DIVERSEcity award for not only promoting awareness of cultural diversity, but successfully implementing culturally diverse initiatives in the workplace. CUPE initiatives included establishing a committee against racism and discrimination, hosting gatherings for First Nations and members of color, and implementing contract language that recognizes traditional Aboriginal culture.

The Federation of Post-Secondary Educators (FPSE) has long had Standing Committees specifically aimed at achieving equity, inclusiveness as well as advocating for rights. The Standing Committee on Human Rights and International Solidarity and the Status of Women Committee are two examples, both of which have both regional and provincial components.

The Collective Agreement between the College Board and Faculty Association of CNC (FACNC) has equity and anti-discrimination language that actually pre-dates the *Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms* in the *Constitution Act* of 1982. Both of the CNC collective agreements have language supporting the principles of employment equity.

Over time, the trend has been towards inclusiveness for all minority groups who were historically disadvantaged through policies, laws and structures whose effects are still felt today as these groups continue to face systemic barriers to employment.

At CNC, the long-term goal is to have employment equity that will include all employee groups who have been disadvantaged. Following mediation through the Human Rights Tribunal, CUPE and the Faculty Association supported CNC's application to the Tribunal for a Special Program to recognize Aboriginal ancestry as a bona fide employment qualification. With approval, the College formed a Special Program Committee comprised of the two unions and CNC administrators to implement the five year program to create a more inclusive environment at CNC. Longer term, the College partners are committed to the principles of employment equity and developing a workforce that supports and reflects the diverse populations of our region.

On this website you will find all the relevant documents about the Human Rights Tribunal Special Program. More will be added as the collaborative committee moves towards a comprehensive communications strategy and implementation plan.

- A copy of the application submitted to the Human Rights Tribunal (HRT)
- The letter from the HRT confirming the details of the five year Special Program to hire Aboriginal employees at CNC
- The definition of a Special Program
- Myths about Employment Equity which will answer many of the Frequently Asked Questions about this program
- A link to the HRT website which outlines program criteria and provides a list of all Special Programs granted by them
- Information about Canada's workforce shortage which strengthens the social justice rationale for having a Special Program to hire Aboriginals

For more information please contact Communications Committee members for the Special Program: Lily Bachand, Marlene Erickson, Jan Mastromatteo, Sandra Rossi.

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