



# Technology Skills Consultation on Northern Strategies

January 16, 2008 ... 11 AM to 2:00 PM  
CNC Campus | 3330 – 22nd Avenue, Prince George BC



## REPORT on consultation – Participant Feedback.

**To help identify the issues and formulate strategies for the north**, the College of New Caledonia (CNC) and the Applied Science Technologists and Technicians of British Columbia (ASTTBC) partnered on a consultation to draw attention to the crisis and help define solutions. Business, industry and community leaders were invited to join CNC President, John Bowman and ASTTBC Executive Director, John Leech to learn of current initiatives and develop a broad strategic approach that will ensure the capacity to deliver technology enterprise throughout Northern BC.

Following presentations by John Bowman and John Leech, several questions were posed and participants responded as follows...

### 1. What should be the role of industry in advocacy efforts?

- **To educational institutions for program needs**
- **On behalf of educational institutions for funding/etc**

#### **Industry's Role is to:**

- Encourage better linkages between industry and college
- Develop links to the schools and colleges to get the word out; links to high school counselors and teachers
- Add funding; sponsor students
- Communicate clearly what industry needs are, the importance of urgent response to needs, and need for flexibility and immediacy
- Work together with institutions to ensure graduate requirements align with employment requirements; ensure changing requirements are communicated
- Meet with politicians to review key shortage issues and finite issues that relate to the shortage
- Forecast needs, generate a 5+ year forecast of labour needs, (labour market info is essential)
- Train on the job, building on basic skills that students are equipped with
- Develop a "Northern Technical Centre"
- Provide access to younger people to explore company settings and get exposure
- Collaborate with other parallel industries – recognize multi-faceted skills
- Co-lobby for funding needs, government funding for tech programs, government incentives for students
- Promote the need to stream our kids early – a college stream?

## **What about applied research as a role for colleges and industry? What would applied research opportunities mean for your organization?**

- Industry partnership – support “projects” which involve students in work and research to give them the experience they need
- Change to the industrial design to improve on-site/field capabilities
- Researchers brought into field to view hands-on what we do, how we do it and to make it better
- Fixing/improving the widget
- Research time/instruction time/link to students as research assistants – a balance that takes an applied project from start to finish efficiently and meaningfully
- There are possibilities for applied research and these opportunities need to be captured
- Could help industry make money, save money and save time

## **What is the responsibility of industry to support programs and students?**

- **New models of partnership**

- Sustain awards, bursaries and scholarships, work scholarships
- Provide worksite training, job shadowing, co-op, skills demonstrations, organizational demonstrations, job fairs
- Open access to their resources for institutions as they can be costly and specific
- Use their websites to link to education institutions
- Hire locally
- Make it a priority to provide support to programs
- Industry has an obligation to financially support programs and students

## **If northern institutions can't respond to your needs for technical people, what will you do?**

- Look elsewhere – head hunt, find unemployed, underemployed, skilled immigrants
- Grow and train in-house
- Provide on-the-job training
- Partner with another institution

## **Other Comments**

- Prior Learning Assessment Review (PLAR) important – used to give credit to prior learning for skilled workers looking at formal tech ed – ensure current courses offer transferability options
- Continuing education for current technologists and also for the transitioning workforce
- Science and math need to be promoted
- A challenge: we are training for today for roles of technology that do not yet exist
- Industry is reactionary

## **About CNC**

CNC is a comprehensive community college offering career – technical education, trades training and university preparation – programs. For more information... <http://cnc.bc.ca>

## **About ASTTBC**

ASTTBC is a self-governing professional association of 9,000+ registrants incorporated under provincial statute to regulate the standards of training and practice of technologists, technicians and technical specialists in applied science and engineering technologies. For more information... <http://www.asttbc.org>