



First Nation's Water Operators Project Interns, left to right: Nolan Allan, Buck Nelson, Melina Laboucan-Massimo, Phillip Stewart, Heather Bohn, and Daniel Smith

### **IAHLA Pioneers New Training for First Nations Small System Water Operators**

IAHLA, in association with First Nations Education Steering Committee, is using computer simulations as the basis for training new First Nation's Water Operators. Since the water system disasters in Walkerton and Kaschewan, the Federal government has decreed that every water system operator must be trained and certified. In class training is typically time constrained and doesn't allow for much hands-on or mentoring.

The program under development uses 3D simulations to enable the trainee operators to experience real-life scenarios and apply the corrective actions, training that would be both disruptive and difficult to do on the job.

IAHLA has brought together a strong partnership with INAC, Thompson Rivers University and UVIC to provide the necessary financing, course content and multimedia facilities. The project, managed under the guidance of MacDonald Dettwiler and Associates, employs six First Nations Interns that provide the various multimedia talents required while creating a framework and capacity to develop further training and educational products.

Read profiles of the Interns in the full version of this article on the IAHLA website [www.fnesc.ca/iahla](http://www.fnesc.ca/iahla)

### **IAHLA Membership Renewals**

We appreciate your participation and membership in IAHLA. Becoming an IAHLA member involves a membership fee of \$200 and the membership year is from July 1 to June 30. Eligible institutes/programs are welcome to apply at any time during the year but pro-rated membership fees are not available. Renew your membership today and you will have voting privileges at the 2009 AGM.

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### **Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association (IAHLA)**

Suite 113 - 100 Park Royal South, West Vancouver, BC V7T 1A2

Toll-Free: 1-877-422-3672

T: 604.925.6087

F: 604.925.6097

[iahla@fnesc.ca](mailto:iahla@fnesc.ca)

[www.fnesc.ca/iahla](http://www.fnesc.ca/iahla)

The Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association (IAHLA) was formed at the request of Indigenous controlled Post-Secondary Institutes and Adult Learning Programs to address and further the mutual interests of all Indigenous controlled Learning Centres in British Columbia (BC). The organization receives administrative support from the First Nations Education Steering Committee.



## Aboriginal Service Plans

Earlier this year, the University of Victoria and the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology (NVIT) received implementation funding along with nine other institutes from the Ministry of Advanced Education (now the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development). The purpose of the three year funding was to develop an Aboriginal Service Plan (ASP) to support the goals established in AVED's Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Action Plan.

Through these consultations, NVIT and UVIC held meetings with IAHLA and developed a partnership to provide an action plan to better serve IAHLA institutes and students. NVIT and UVIC have funded several ASP meetings to examine current Education Agreements and what an ideal Agreement could contain. The Year 1 IAHLA/NVIT/UVic final report will be released later this fall.

A second component of the IAHLA/NVIT/UVic Aboriginal Service Plan initiative is the support of IAHLA students transitioning to public post-secondary institutes. An NVIT "Successful Transition Information Fair" will take place at the Burnaby campus on November 20 and 21, 2008. This forum is geared towards Aboriginal adult learners who are looking for support and resources to help them make a transition from their Aboriginal institute/community to a public post-secondary institution. "Successful Transitions Information Fair"

announcements will be sent to IAHLA institutes in the coming weeks. (Note: this is a change in date from the original October date). Please contact NVIT Burnaby at 1-877-682-3300 for more



## A Place for Aboriginal Institutes

The IAHLA membership has provided key input to the discussion and drafting of the policy paper, Aboriginal Post Secondary Education in

B.C.: A Place for Aboriginal Institutes, which highlights issues related to the formal recognition of Aboriginal-controlled post-secondary institutions as a crucial component of the post-secondary system of BC. The policy paper represents a way to contribute our perspective to inform an integrated model, which is now being considered by the Ministry of Advanced Education for BC post-secondary education. It is hoped that these considerations will create space for recognition, inclusion, and support of Aboriginal controlled and governed institutes in BC.

The policy paper sets out the following six recommendations:

1. The province should create policy and legislation that establishes a more integrated post-secondary education system by recognizing the unique and critical role of Aboriginal institutes.
2. Recognizing the need for academic quality assurance, which will facilitate student mobility, efficiency of the system, as well as mutual accountability, the Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association (IAHLA) will work with Aboriginal institutes to create an effective and thorough

quality assurance system based upon high standards and rigorous review.

3. The Province of British Columbia should support the establishment of effective, respectful partnerships between Aboriginal institutes and public post-secondary institutions through policy development, support for research of best practices, and the promotion of dialogue and exchange. These efforts should include mechanisms for a widespread sharing of expertise and resources to enhance the effectiveness of the new integrated post-secondary education system.

4. Aboriginal representatives and the provincial government should engage the federal government in a review of the respective contributions and roles of Canada, BC, and Aboriginal Nations within an integrated BC post-secondary education system.

5. Aboriginal institutes in British Columbia should have access to funding from the Province of British Columbia that will strengthen their programs and enhance their contributions to an integrated provincial post-secondary education system. In particular, funding should be provided to support Aboriginal institutes in developing their capacity as post-secondary programming "hubs," enabling them to develop specific expertise in areas of critical importance to Aboriginal communities and peoples.

6. The "Provincial Education Number" (PEN) utilized by the Ministry of Education and soon to be used by the public post-secondary institutions should be used throughout the new integrated model of the BC post-secondary education system. Using a consistent data collection mechanism will ensure that the resulting data is comparable.

To review the full paper, visit <http://www.fnesc.bc.ca/iahla/>



## Native Education College - 40 years and still going strong

Native Education College (NEC), BC's largest private Aboriginal post-secondary educational institute, has been in operation for over 40 years.

The mandate of the NEC is to meet the needs of Aboriginal adult learners requiring developmental, vocational, and applied academic programs that provide access to employment or further post-secondary education. In accomplishing this, NEC is dedicated to providing a culturally appropriate and supportive learning environment for Aboriginal people. Faculty and staff strive to combine academic excellence with a strong commitment to the best practices of Aboriginal adult education. NEC and its learners have benefited greatly from the efforts of these skilled and dedicated individuals.

NEC works with learners located in both the urban environment of the Lower Mainland who attend the Longhouse facility located in the Mount Pleasant area of Vancouver, and with Aboriginal communities throughout the province.

The organization also acknowledges the support of the many other partners it has worked with during its 40 year history and particularly, over the last 15 months as NEC examined its future and direction. Partners include: the First Nations Leadership Council and its constituent members, which are the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, the First Nations Summit, and the BC Assembly of First Nations; the Aboriginal Community Career Employment Services Society; the First Nations Education Steering Committee; IAHLA; United Native Nations, and numerous First Nations in British Columbia.

NEC offers a range of programs to over 100 students every year, including Adult Basic Education, Early Childhood Education, Aboriginal Tourism Operations, and Applied Business Technology.

*Four prestigious members of IAHLA were honoured at the 2008 IAHLA Annual General Meeting for their past and present dedication:*  
(L-R) **Fran Hunt-Jinnouchi** – Founding Member of IAHLA and Former Chair. Currently working as Director at the Office of Indigenous Affairs – University of Victoria; **Theresa Dennis** – Former ISSP Chair (retired); **Pauline Waterfall** – Founding Member of IAHLA and Current Vice-Chair - Heiltsuk College – Bella Bella; **Jacob McKay** – Founding Member of IAHLA and Current Board Member – Wilp Wilxo'oskwhl Nisga'a - Nass Valley



## Transitions Research

In 2007, the IAHLA Board of Directors moved to form a partnership with the University of Victoria. The purpose of the partnership was to conduct a comprehensive transition-focused research project to describe the history of Aboriginal controlled post-secondary institutes; describe their structure and processes; and articulate the role they play in preparing Aboriginal students to make the transition to public post-secondary education. This research is funded through the AVED Transition Research funding and a joint steering committee has been formed to oversee this research.

Six IAHLA institutes have agreed to participate in the transitions research. The IAHLA institutes have recommended masters level students who have been hired as research assistants for the duration of the project. The participating IAHLA members are: Saanich Adult Education Centre, Heiltsuk College, Gitksan Wet'suwet'en Education Society, Native Education College, En'owkin Centre, Nicola Valley Institute of Technology (both Burnaby & Merritt campuses).



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## Data Collection

IAHLA has had a formal data collection process since 2005, and now the data collection for 2007/08 has been completed by Juniper Consulting under the direction of the IAHLA Data Working Group. The IAHLA data collection initiative has been undertaken to understand the unique needs of Indigenous institutes and to give all of us data to make informed decisions, provide accountability, and provide direction for the Association.

The IAHLA data collection focuses on five major elements.

- Personal Development
- Leadership Development
- Cultural Development
- Wisdom Development
- Student Satisfaction

The 2007/08 IAHLA Data Collection project includes surveys for institute staff and students. Twenty-three of twenty-eight (82%) eligible institutes responded, and of the more than 1200 students enrolled, 404 (32%) learners responded.

The findings of the 2007/08 data collection initiative indicate that 52% of the responding institutes have affiliation agreements, and large numbers have brokering agreements and other formal partnerships.

One of the important findings is the high level of support and satisfaction reported by the institute's students. Over 86% have indicated that they are satisfied with their institutions and the work those institutes are doing. All institutes reported that celebrating student achievement was an important activity for their institute.

The 2008/09 IAHLA Data Collection will begin in October of 2008, and institute and student surveys will need to be submitted no later than **October 31, 2008**.

IAHLA greatly appreciates the participation in the Data Collection project. The aggregate Final Data Report has been useful when working with other education stakeholders to highlight the role of IAHLA institutes in the post-secondary education system in BC.

## Annual General Meeting

Mark your calendars for the **2009 IAHLA AGM – “Celebrating Our Strengths,” May 1 & 2, 2009.**

It will take place at the Marriott Hotel Vancouver Pinnacle, 1128 West Hastings, Vancouver.

Watch the IAHLA website in December for the Call for Presenters. We look forward to seeing you all there!



**www.aboriginallearning.ca**

*If your students are looking for a post-secondary funding resource, well look no further than **Aboriginal Learning Links (ALL)**. It's a one-stop shop for information on scholarships, bursaries and resources for post-secondary education around BC.*

*Designed for Aboriginal adult and post-secondary learners, ALL has links to financial support, post-secondary institutes, child care, housing, career opportunities and much more.*

*Aboriginal Learning Links is an initiative of the BC Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Partners Group.*

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## Welcome New IAHLA Members!

- Burns Lake Development Corporation, Burns Lake
- The Community Education Authority, Fort Nelson First Nation
- Wah-meesh Learning Centre, Gold River
- Cheam Indian Band, Rosedale

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## IAHLA Board

Chair: Verna Billy-Minnabarriet, Nicola Valley Institute of Technology - Merritt

Vice-Chair: Pauline Waterfall, Heiltsuk College - Waglisla

Secretary: Cathy Seymour, Kwadacha Dune Ty

Treasurer: Joe Elliott, Chemainus Native College

Member: Jacob McKay, Wilp Wilxo'oskwhl Nisga'a - Nass Valley

Member: Jeanette Armstrong, Kootenay-Okanagan Region

Member: Tracey Woods, Gitksan Wet'suwet'en Education Society - Hazelton

Member: Louise Lacerte, Ted Williams Memorial Learning Centre

Member: Sharon Wilson, Nuxalk College

**The IAHLA Board would like to thank Huia Martin, Native Education College, for serving the Board for two years as Treasurer.**