
Scott McAlpine

November 2010

Sign Language Interpretation Program Wins Award

Douglas College is the first post-secondary institution in Canada to win a North America-wide award presented to sign language interpreter programs for their contributions to the field. Douglas' program of Sign Language Interpretation was given the 2010 Video Relay Service Interpreter Education Program Award of Excellence by Sorenson Communications. The annual award is given to an interpreter education program that is making a meaningful contribution by expanding curriculum and responding to the ever-increasing demand for interpreters.

Sorenson Communications is an American company that provides video relay service for deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals who use sign language to communicate. Sorenson is the largest supplier of this service in North America and has operations in BC and across Canada. Video Relay Service (VRS) is a communication service that allows deaf people to make phone calls using video through an American Sign Language interpreter. The interpreter relays the signed message to a hearing listener via phone and the spoken message to the deaf person via video.

The program will receive a cash award of \$10,000 plus \$5,500 in credits to purchase resource materials for the program.

Skills Connect Networking Gala

On Thursday, November 4th the Skills Connect Networking Gala took place at the Executive Inn in Burnaby. One hundred staff and clients from this Training Group program attended the event. Skills Connect clients are skilled immigrants looking for work in their field of expertise who are assisted by a team of dedicated career consultants as they transition into their field. Many prepare themselves to qualify for professional work by taking technical upgrading courses, completing licensing requirements, and developing their professional network. The audience heard from a few attendees in the group who have successfully launched their careers in Canada, including:

- an optician who has earned his license in Canada and will soon be opening an optical business
- a psychiatric nurse who is working as a mental health care support worker
- an IT specialist who has found a job as a business systems analyst
- a physician with a health information systems background who is working as a HealthLink data steward
- a former director of border services administration who, after one week on the job as a security guard, is being groomed for a management position

To date, of the 906 individuals who have completed the program, 72% are employed, and of those who are employed, 86% are working at a level commensurate with their background and training. Douglas College is the only BC public post-secondary institution providing Skills Connect services.

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Masque Royale – celebrating 40 years

Hundreds of people in full costume packed the NWC gymnasium on October 30th for the Masque Royale, a Renaissance-themed event celebrating the 40th anniversary of Douglas College and the 25th anniversary of the Foundation.

Foundation staff worked with people from across the College, including MCO, CEIT, Facilities, Finance, Stagecraft, Chartwells and HORM students to create the fundraising gala. MCs Peter Legge of Canadawide Media Ltd. and CBC's Claire Martin led guests through a night to remember that included a wine reception, acrobatics by CircusAerials, a strolling magician and a troubadour, Collegium Leonum - a Medieval/Renaissance music group - a gourmet buffet by Chartwells and champion ballroom dancers performing the waltz before dancing to the music of a DJ.

The stunning transformation of the gymnasium enhanced the enjoyment of the evening for guests who included political and business leaders from New Westminster, the TriCities and Metro Vancouver, as well as faculty and staff. Lisa Neilson, a Criminology student, gave a moving speech that credited Douglas with helping her change her life around. The inspiration she provided, along with generous sponsors, exciting raffles, and live and silent auctions, should see the Foundation having raised more than \$60,000 for student aid.

U-Pass at Douglas College

After years of lobbying and months of negotiations, Douglas College students will soon be able to vote on whether or not they want to take part in U-Pass, which will provide access to discounted TransLink monthly passes. The discounted three-zone passes could make a significant difference to students who are currently paying \$81 per month for transportation with a college-purchased FastTrax sicker. Under the new U-Pass, students would pay just \$30.

The student vote at Douglas College will be organized by the Douglas Student Union within the next month. If students vote to accept the U-Pass, passes are expected to be available in Spring 2011.

Recognition Events

Two special events have been held in the last few weeks to honour both departing Douglas College Board members and retiring employees.

On October 23rd, we recognized and celebrated the tremendous contributions made by College Board members who concluded their service in the last year: Graeme Bowbrick, Dave Guedes, Michael Hwang, Susan Meshwork and Mike Regan.

On November 5th, 90 guests and past retirees attended a reception and dinner to honour this year's 21 retirees for their valued contributions to our organization and our students. Cumulatively, the retirees this year represent over 440 years of dedicated service!

Professional Development and Wellness Workshops in October 2010

Smokers – Train Your Inner Alligator

There were 13 participants for two Smokers workshops where Dr. Fred Bass, who has spent a lifetime in the study and support of smoking cessation, offered insights and gave participants information to aid in their battle to stop smoking. Participants stated that they found his combination of research and insight of human behaviour to be extremely valuable.

Superfoods – The Power of Whole Foods

Ten participants attended the first of two workshops to learn about 15 phenomenal whole foods to eat constantly. The workshop was presented by Nicole Fetterly, a registered dietician. She clarified myths and truths about healthy foods and offered ways to save money while making healthy food choices.

Behavioural Interviewing for Selection Committee Members – Best Practices

Fifteen selection committee members from a wide variety of college departments and faculties attended the first of two all day workshops on the topic of effectively managing the recruitment process. They also practiced creating and using behavioural interviewing questions. The workshop was facilitated by Debra Lindsay, a certified human resources professional and experienced professional recruiter and trainer.