



President's Report December 2008/January 2009

News and Special Events

Niagara College Winter Enrolment Up 28 Percent – After experiencing the largest enrolment jump in Ontario for Fall 2008, Niagara College also experienced a record increase in enrolments for Winter 2009. As of January 5, enrolment for programs with January 2009 starts were up 28 percent over last year's numbers. Applications for January start programs were up 34 percent over the previous year, compared to a 10 percent increase in applications province-wide.

Niagara College counselors Donna Putman and Jocelyne Briggs together with Professor Joanne Bakker made a presentation to 85 scholars from 25 countries around the world at the Worldwide Forum on Education and Culture held during December 2008 in Rome, Italy. Their topic and audio-visual resource, "**Their Voice, our Ears: Finding ways to Encourage Student Success**" was very well received by audiences. This project was partly funded by the Niagara College Innovation Fund during 2008/09.

Niagara College hosted the St. Catharines-Thorold Chamber of Commerce **Business After 5** event at the Niagara Culinary Institute. This was an opportunity to network with members of the local business community who viewed our NOTL facilities, Building Futures master plan and learned more about the capital campaign, while enjoying college wine, food, and hospitality.

Niagara College held a special ceremony February 3rd to celebrate the Grand Opening of its **Niagara Waters Spa** at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Campus. The fully-equipped spa allows second-year Esthetician students to gain valuable hands-on experience in a practical learning environment while strengthening the skills and knowledge gained in class. Program faculty and lab technologists oversee all aspects of operations and treatments within the spa. Today's event included a ribbon-cutting ceremony, student demonstrations, door prizes, gift certificate and grand prize giveaways.

Niagara College Students

It is with great sadness that we announce that **Eleanor (Ellie) Burbidge**, 21, an Honour Student in our Business Administration - Human Resources program, died last month as the result of a motor vehicle accident. A resident of Port Colborne, Ellie was in the second year of her program, and was also the President of the HR Niagara Association. A memorial service was held on February 1st in Port Colborne where family, fellow students, teachers and College staff gathered to pay their last respects.

Niagara College launches new TV spots produced by students – A unique new learning initiative at Niagara College launched this week as four television commercials, written and produced by the third-year film students, began airing on network television. They will air in rotation beginning Monday for 9 weeks on CH TV (which covers 90% of Ontario, plus nationwide on the various satellite systems). This is an exciting and unique new initiative for Niagara College that should facilitate increased awareness throughout the province. A college-wide announcement and media release will be distributed on Monday. http://www.niagaracollege.ca/nccommercials/video_player.htm

The **Niagara College Men's Basketball** team enjoyed #1 provincial and #3 national ranking for 2 weeks during January with a 10-2 win/loss record. The Ontario Colleges Athletic Association ranks and posts its ranking weekly on its website. This news – a first in the team's history- was also picked up by local newspapers, and broadcast on the Niagara College website. The team is winding up its regular season and will prepare for the provincial championships to be held in Ottawa at month's end.

In Recognition of Excellence

2008 Niagara Peninsula Conservation Achievement Award – **Andrea Sinclair**, faculty in the Ecosystem Restoration program, was honoured with a 2008 Niagara Peninsula Conservation Achievement Award. The award is presented by the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority to encourage and promote volunteerism in conservation activities by providing public recognition to those who are contributing in some way to conservation efforts. Andrea and her students have been very active in the community, participating in preservation and restoration projects.

Martin Smith, professor and coordinator of the College's Environmental Technician program, and the Niagara Environmental Corps (NEC), is the recipient of the **Colleges Ontario Innovation Award**. Smith created the NEC in 2006. The NEC is currently 135 members strong, and works to increase environmental awareness at the college and empower students to be proactive in solving environmental issues and build healthy communities. The Colleges Ontario Awards recognize individuals, organizations and volunteers who have made an outstanding contribution to the advancement of Ontario's college system. This year marks the third year in a row that Niagara College students, staff or alumni have been honoured by Colleges Ontario. The award will be presented Feb. 23 in Toronto during the Colleges Ontario 2009 Conference.

Dan Patterson and Jack Lightstone received the Business Education Council's **Community Partners Award** in recognition of their outstanding community involvement and partnership between Brock University and Niagara College.

On the Academic Front

As a result of growing enrolment, changes in programming and program delivery, a **new Academic Division structure** was announced in early February. The new structure, expected to be in place for the start of the 2009 Fall term, will move us forward and support the teaching and learning infrastructure and services our students require. A recent review by an external consultant revealed that Niagara College is significantly less resourced in the area of academic leadership and management than comparable colleges, and identified the need to invest in this area. The new structure provides the academic and administrative leadership required, and provides for succession planning and continued college evolution. The structure was developed within the financial context of Niagara College, and will be sustainable within the forecast funding framework. Over the coming months, Vice-President Academic Steve Hudson will be working with Deans to finalize the transition to the new structure.

The **Niagara Culinary Institute (NCI)** started a bread production service with the **Culinary Apprenticeship** program this winter. This well coordinated effort between faculty and staff at the NCI provides a great learning opportunity for the students. This learning opportunity exposes the students to the aspects of production, marketing, sales, and direct customer service. The NOTL campus community can enjoy the 100 loaves average production every Tuesday to Friday. The students provide this service at the front and back entrances of the main building of the campus from 3:15 p.m. until the last loaf is sold.

Niagara College is one of six Ontario community colleges participating in a **Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO)** pilot study of collaborative innovation teams for course redesign in Developmental Mathematics. A team of college faculty and course design experts will work together to adapt and apply innovative teaching and learning methods in course redesign. From Niagara College, Nestor Komar and Beth Condino are the faculty participants, and Dave Taylor is the administrative contact.

The College has entered into an agreement with the **Early Childhood Community Development Centre** to deliver training for child care supervisors who are involved of the Mentoring Pairs for Childcare Program. This training will take place over the next year. Thirty supervisors participated in the first segment from January 26 to 29 at the Maid of the Mist Campus.

Niagara College hosted 25 library technicians from every area of the District School Board of Niagara in December to discuss potential for joint **Information Literacy** programs to prepare high school students for research at the College level. Niagara College staff find that many students arrive without knowledge of electronic databases although they are teaching this at the high school level. Plans are underway to meet again in the spring to expand the discussion on joint Information Literacy workshops. It is also planned to meet with the Niagara District Catholic High School Board in April/May to begin the same discussion.

Niagara International

English as a Second Language programs have been very popular this winter with a record 163 domestic and international students enrolled reflecting a 58.3% increase over the same time last year. Winter is not normally such a busy term given the winter weather conditions in Canada. However, rather than returning home to warmer climates this winter, many students continued their studies in preparation for their post secondary studies in the fall.

There are also 20 international students studying with us this winter through a contract with the Ministry of Education of Chile and another 16 students who are here under a contract with Hoseo University in South Korea.

Niagara Research

Niagara College Instrumental in Donation – With the assistance of Niagara College, nine workstations were generously donated to nGen. The donor, Dell Canada Inc., has been an on-going supporter in hopes of fostering growth for students and graduates of Niagara College and Brock University. This contribution from Dell totals approximately \$54,400.

Foundation and Alumni News and Information

Building Futures Campaign – Efforts continue to secure financial support from external donors, as well as the internal family campaign of staff and faculty. We encourage all Governors to support the campaign to ensure a 100 per cent commitment. The Campaign Cabinet is meeting regularly to identify and review prospects, and to develop strategies to secure commitments in these challenging economic times. A number of cultivation activities are underway. The Foundation has recently received and recognized gifts from the Les Marmitons, Opimian Society, Eva Lewis, and the Heavy Construction and Sewer and Watermain Associations.

Scholarships and Bursaries – A total of 310 awards with a value of \$120,000 are available as scholarships and bursaries this year. The College's endowment is now at \$6.3 million.

The Niagara College Foundation ran a **Silent Auction Fundraiser** in December. The auction featured great merchandise and services from local and trusted businesses who have generously donated to our College.

Extensive planning is underway to introduce a variety of initiatives targeted at the **graduating student**. These initiatives have included a graduating student survey, focus group and continued planning with a small grad student leadership team. Initiatives that will be implemented this spring include a Grad Send off event on April 8 which should involve 20+ vendors with relevant products/services for graduates, profiling career enhancement workshops, developing a coordinate graduating student website, providing exciting benefits targeted specifically at graduating students (e.g. free three month CAA Niagara membership), and hosting a Discover Toronto grad event in late May (targeted at graduated relocating to Toronto)

Niagara College hosted a very successful mix and mingle event at the Niagara Culinary Institute (NCI) that provided the opportunity for graduating students to network and discuss early career issues with recent graduates from the Bachelor of Applied Business (Hospitality Operations Management). The event, coordinated by David Berry and Michelle Silk, was enjoyed by more than 50 participants and include dinner at NCI, brief presentations by alumni, and informal networking time.

Student Services

The **Multi-Faith Chaplaincy Services**, newly launched in June 2008, received year two funding (\$10,750) from the Hamilton Conference United Church. Rev. Dr. Prince Conteh was hired as Niagara College's first ever college chaplain, and has quickly infused himself in events and organizations on campus, including first-year student orientation, international student events and campus clubs with a religious focus.

The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) provided Niagara College with \$26,000 to specifically support apprentices with disabilities as part of the annual **Accessibility Fund for Students with Disabilities**. This will allow disability office staff to developing and co-ordinate outreach activities, case management and accommodation plans for this growing population of students on campus.

During December and January, the **First Nations Student Services** office hosted and/or participated in a number of cultural events on and off campus, including sessions on "Herbs and Healing", "The Seven Teaching our Elders Teach Us", and an Aboriginal Cooking presentation at the NCI. Sessions were open to staff, students and visitors; each was well attended, and especially by the college's International students, who demonstrate a genuine desire to learn more about Canadian and other cultures.

MTCU announced a special envelope of funding for colleges and universities to target support to Aboriginal students. Niagara College's share is \$140,000, which will be used to expand access (recruitment and outreach) and student support services (retention). Niagara College currently has 112 identified Aboriginal students studying in a wide range of programs and at every campus, including Six Nations Polytechnic in Ohsweken. This represents a 34% increase from 2007/08 student numbers.

Student Administrative Council (SAC)

Niagara College once again partnered with SAC to host its annual **White Ribbon Charity Breakfast**, in recognition of the December 6th day to Eliminate Violence Against Women and commemorate the anniversary of the 1989 massacre that occurred at L'Ecole Polytechnic in Montreal, where 14 female students were killed by a gunman.

Niagara College SAC was selected to host the **2010 AMICCUS-C Conference** in partnership with Brock University Student Union. This is a national organization that supports professional staff that work with student councils. This conference will bring over 150 delegates from across Canada to Niagara (specifically Niagara Falls).

Randy Conlon, Job Connect Consultant, was inducted into **SAC's Hall of Fame**. During 1988-89, Randy was President of SAC, served as the student member of the Board of Governors, represented the Western Region on the College Student Alliance, and represented Ontario students at the ACCC. Randy was instrumental in the campaign to bring Niagara College its first Student Centre, After Hours. Randy has worked for the college for 18 years, and was previously co-coordinator of Student Recruitment. He is also an assistant coach with the Niagara College Knights Men's Basketball team.

SAC has approved increased Spring/Summer **transportation services** that will include expanded runs and schedules for the Welland and Niagara on the Lake campuses, where approximately 400 students will be attending classes May to August 2009. The arrangement is a partnership between SAC and the Region's 3 inter-municipal transit providers – Welland, St. Catharines and Niagara Falls.

Campus Safety and Facilities

The 15,000 square-foot expansion to the **Technology Skills Centre** at the Welland Campus was completed in December and officially welcomed students to their new facilities January 5th. The expansion houses classrooms and a new state-of-the-art welding lab, and expanded capacity in technology programs.

Brock University-Niagara College Security Partnership – Donna Moody, Director, Campus Security Services, Brock University and Teresa Quinlin, Acting Vice President, Corporate Services are in the initial stages of drafting an agreement for a security partnership between the two institutions.

On January 16, 2009, members of the College's Emergency Operating Committee (EOC) and their alternates participated in a full day **emergency table top exercise** referred to as "Exercise Niagara Knight." This tabletop exercise allowed participants to respond to a number of adverse hypothetical situations that our College could face in the future. Others participating in this initiative were three Commanders of the Emergency Task Force of the Niagara Regional Police Services (NRPS) and Donna Moody. Governors Cathy Ashby, Gordon Hunchak and Beverly Davies were also present to monitor and observe the activities throughout the day. Special thanks to the NRPS for allowing the three Commanders to participate in this initiative and to the Commanders themselves for providing great direction and insight to the members and alternate members of the EOC. We also thank Donna for taking time out from her busy schedule and actively participating and providing sage advice in this valuable training exercise.

Funding Advocacy

The College has been engaged in extensive advocacy the municipal, provincial and federal levels over the past few months, aimed at securing infrastructure funds from the federal, provincial and regional governments in support of the College's Master Plan. The College has increased its level of federal government advocacy, given the recent federal budget announcement of \$600 million in infrastructure funds for Canadian colleges to support projects to enhance colleges' capacity to deliver advanced knowledge and skills training. In addition to our own efforts, including meetings with local MPs Rick Dykstra and Dean Allison, we have also been involved in a collaborative approach with Durham, St. Clair and Sheridan Colleges, to make a case for infrastructure funding to strengthen the economic diversification capacity of the colleges in the four areas most affected by the decline in the automotive sector.

At the provincial level, the College has been meeting with local MPPs and key decision-makers to communicate the critical infrastructure needs of Niagara College and to promote our list of "shovel-ready" infrastructure projects. We continue to lobby for increased infrastructure and deferred maintenance funds through the consultation process facilitated by the Courtyard Group, hired by provincial government to help the Province establish a multi-year capital funding plan.

Colleges Ontario / Provincial Update

The Colleges Ontario **Budget Submission to the Ontario government** focused on operating funds and ensuring colleges get a fair share of Reaching Higher funding for 2009-10, capital funding for deferred maintenance, funding for applied research, and funding support for a credit transfer system. Colleges Ontario has also been ensuring that government is aware of the cost implications around the potential unionization of part-time employees. Colleges Ontario has been briefing senior officials throughout the government, including the Premier's Office, Cabinet Office, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU), and many others.

The colleges' immediate advocacy efforts around **system design** will focus on three areas: credit

transfer, college degree granting, and apprenticeship. Presidents also recommended the advocacy work on better pathways through a system-wide credit transfer system also specifically include credential recognition.

Colleges Ontario launched a new **province-wide marketing campaign**, a follow-up to last year's "Obay" campaign. While the creative direction has changed, the messaging and positioning continues to address the insight that there tends to be a parental bias against colleges in comparison to universities, in Ontario. (This insight was gleaned from consumer research conducted by Colleges Ontario in 2007). The focus is on young people saying "It's all about M.E." (with the 'M.E.' in varsity-style letters) as they discuss their education goals. The ads encourage parents and students to recognize that a college education may be the best option for many young people seeking to fulfill their career aspirations. Colleges Ontario has booked media in the Niagara region, so we should start to see/hear some of the ads shortly.

The **Ontario Labour Relations Board** completed a secret ballot vote on OPSEU's application to represent part-time and sessional academic employees. Polling stations at Niagara College were open from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. and 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. on January 27th at the Welland and Niagara-on-the-Lake campuses. Voter turnout was low province-wide. The Labour Board ruled that all ballot boxes be sealed system-wide, because it was questionable whether OPSEU had met the necessary statutory requirements that a vote be held. The Labour Board will review the matter and make its ruling in the coming weeks. The Labour Board is taking this action to ensure that due process is being followed and that employees' rights are being protected. The colleges will, of course, respect the Labour Board's decision on this issue.

Upcoming Events

Seafood Gala – April 3, 2009

Foundation volunteers and staff are actively seeking sponsors and live auction items to help ensure we meet the revenue target for this event to raise money for scholarships and bursaries. Ticket sales are underway and we encourage everyone to attend this outstanding event at the Fallsview Casino Resort. For more information, call 905-735-2211, ext. 7551 or go to www.niagaracollege.ca/seafoodgala.

Curling Rocks Bonspiel

The Niagara College Foundation and Alumni Affairs will hold its second annual Curling Rocks Bonspiel at the St. Catharines Golf and Country Club on Saturday, Feb. 28, 2009. The event begins at 1 p.m. and goes until 6 p.m. There will be a free curling lesson for interested participants at noon before the bonspiel begins. The cost is \$100 for a team of four. Participants can also register as individuals or small groups for \$25 per person. We have a limit of 12 teams, so register soon by emailing alumni@niagaracollege.ca. Throughout the afternoon we will rock the house curling three mini games, having refreshments and giving prizes.