

# *Made In B.C.*

**A History of Postsecondary Education  
in British Columbia**



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November 2007**



## The little paper that grew...

This paper started as a small professional development project in the summer of 2007. With the influx of a new generation of educators, I felt I should be better equipped to describe the historical development of the BC postsecondary system, perhaps identifying a few themes to help with remembering the developments. I enjoyed the project and as I blathered about my learning, my colleagues expressed rather more interest in the topic than I had expected.

Once it became clear that others would like to read the resulting paper, I looked for help in filling in the gaps and with some fact checking. The project wasn't intended as a scholarly activity, and there may still be areas where I haven't got it entirely right, but I am grateful for the assistance of a number of people. In particular, I'd like to thank my colleagues in the institutional research community for enabling me to move past the first draft and for their ongoing commitment to education in British Columbia.

*There is an awful lot of difference between reading something and actually seeing it, for you can never tell, till you see it, just how big a liar History is.*

*- Will Rogers*

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# Summary

Intersecting the enduring theme of providing British Columbians with greater social and geographical access to postsecondary education is a single event – John Macdonald’s 1962 report on *Higher Education in British Columbia and a Plan for the Future* – that dramatically altered the BC postsecondary landscape.

In 1960, public postsecondary education in BC consisted essentially of:

- The University of British Columbia
- Victoria College
- A few vocational schools
- A few special purpose institutions
- School districts offering continuing education and Grade 13

The public’s educational aspirations were rising, especially in the poorly served non-metropolitan regions of the province. The leading edge of the baby boom generation was approaching postsecondary education.

Macdonald’s report became the rallying point for action. By 1965, Simon Fraser University (“BC’s instant university”) and the University of Victoria (emerging from Victoria College) were enrolling students, a decade of establishing community colleges had begun, and federal funding for postsecondary technical and vocational schools led to the establishment of BCIT and additional vocational schools. (The vocational schools started merging with colleges in 1971.)

The BC college system, modeled on the comprehensive 2-year colleges with substantial university transfer offerings found in the western USA, is distinctive with Alberta in the Canadian context. The colleges were originally governed through school districts and relied on a substantial contribution from local property taxes.

From the early sixties to the late eighties, the BC postsecondary system expanded rapidly but more or less along the same trajectory. Since the late 1980s, however, the consensus about the role and mission of various institutions has eroded. Beginning with the creation of the University of Northern British Columbia in 1990, followed by the transition of five 2-year colleges into degree-granting university colleges, and the introduction of baccalaureate degrees in applied subjects across the college and institute system, the expansion of degree-granting programs has emerged as a powerful theme since the nineties. The range of institutional types expanded with the establishment of some distance education and aboriginal institutions, and with the creation of three special purpose universities: the short-lived Technical University of BC (now SFU Surrey), Royal Roads, and Thompson Rivers.

Within government, the original hands-on approach to colleges and the hands-off approach to universities is gradually converging.

## Pretest: The “Firsts”

1. What university first offered courses and awarded bachelor’s degrees to students from British Columbia?

*UBC is good guess, but it’s wrong. If you said SFU or the University of Victoria, you definitely need to read this primer. (See page 1)*

2. What were the first two-year colleges in BC to subsequently be authorized by the BC legislature to grant bachelor’s degrees?

*If you mentioned an institution that has “university college” in its name, you’re wrong. This is a tricky question in that the correct answers are private, not-for-profit institutions. (See page 3)*

3. What level of government (federal, provincial or local) established BC’s first community colleges?

*Local government: colleges were established by regional consortia of school districts, requiring endorsement by the voting public in a plebiscite. About half the colleges’ operating budget came from local property taxes and tuition.*

4. What was the first private university located in BC to grant BA degrees?

*If you named an institution in the Lower Mainland or on Vancouver Island, keep reading. (See page 3)*



# Institutional Developments

## *Origins*

### **A Bumpy Start, 1890 – 1929**

Within five years of the Canadian Pacific Railroad reaching the West Coast in 1886, attempts were made to provide for higher education in this frontier society. It was not until the 1920s, however, that the efforts developed momentum and permanence.

In 1890, enabling legislation allowed for the establishment of a University of British Columbia, but ratepayers turned down a request for it to be located in the capital city, Victoria. As an alternative, high schools in Vancouver and Victoria established affiliation agreements with McGill University in Montreal. Victoria College began offering first year McGill curriculum in Arts and Sciences to seven students in 1903. By 1906, McGill University College was operating in Vancouver.

(Decades later, school districts also served as midwives for the BC college system. The university college concept, with an established university initially awarding degrees for fledgling baccalaureate institutions, re-emerged in the late 1980s.)

The *BC University Act* established UBC in 1908, but UBC did not register students until 1915. Its temporary location was the Fairview site of Vancouver General Hospital, near Broadway and Oak Street. Victoria College lost its financial support that same year, 1915, and was forced to close for several years.

In the non-university sector, teacher education generally consisted of a year of training in “normal school.” The first normal school opened in 1901 in Vancouver. A second opened in Victoria in 1915, at what later became the Lansdowne Campus of Camosun College.

In vocational education, it appears that soon after the turn of the century about 4,000 students annually were taking evening classes in high schools throughout BC. It was not until the World War I era that BC high schools began offering technical and vocational education to their daytime, teenage students.

Victoria College may have been down in 1915, but it was not out. Under heavy pressure from the provincial government, spurred once more by the principal of Victoria High School, UBC reluctantly granted affiliation in 1920 to a new Victoria College. Eighty-three students enrolled in Fall 1920 in Victoria College, located on the top floor of a high school. The following year, the Victoria school board rented the Dunsmuir mansion, Craigdarroch Castle, as a new site for Victoria College.

The 1920s were a significant decade for the development of education in British Columbia. Primary and secondary education were examined in detail in the Putnam-Weir

Report of 1924 and a world class high school correspondence program was started in 1929 – BC’s first foray into distance education and the first policy response of the BC government to the issue of “non-metropolitan education.”

UBC moved to its permanent campus on Point Grey in 1925, although enrolment was still less than 2,000 students. The Vancouver School of Decorative and Applied Arts, which evolved into the present day Emily Carr Institute of Art + Design, opened that same year.

## **Doldrums, 1930 – 1945**

Despite calls to close UBC because the province could no longer afford it, BC’s fledgling postsecondary system survived the Great Depression of the 1930s. In fact, career education received a slight boost with the passage of the 1934 *Apprenticeship Act* that required some night school attendance.

Major training programs for civilians and the military developed during World War II, setting the stage for the post-war expansion of BC postsecondary education. At the close of the war, BC’s postsecondary system consisted of little more than a largely undergraduate university in Vancouver with an affiliated college in Victoria, two normal schools providing basic teacher education, a few specialized institutions such as an art school in Vancouver and a vocational school in Nanaimo, and night school courses in high schools around the province.

## **Expansion and Diversification, 1946 – 1960**

In the post-war era, the province established ten vocational schools, beginning in 1958 with the BC Vocational School in Burnaby. These vocational schools built on programs originally offered in Vancouver’s high schools and in Nanaimo’s Dominion – Provincial Youth Training School that opened in 1936. Victoria College was on the move again, this time from Craigdarroch Castle to the Lansdowne campus where the normal school was located. The big story, however, in the immediate post-war era concerns UBC.

A federal policy decision to provide financial support to all veterans seeking further education, coupled with UBC’s determination to provide spaces for all, saw UBC enrolment skyrocket from 3,000 in 1944 to 9,500 in 1948. The federal government provided direct financial aid to all Canadian universities, a source of funding which continued into the 1950s when they were replaced by per capita grants to the provincial government.

As well as serving more students, UBC expanded its curriculum by adding new faculties, mainly in applied fields:

- 1945 Law
- 1948 Graduate Studies
- 1949 Pharmacy

- 1950 Forestry
- 1950 Medicine
- 1956 Education (at which time teacher training moved from normal schools to the university)

Apart from the two post-war vocational schools, no new public institutions opened until the 1960s. Dennison (1997), drawing on Waite (1987), comments:

“Part of the explanation for this deficiency lay with the attitude of [UBC] President MacKenzie. Fearful that the already precarious fiscal support for higher education from the provincial government would be diluted further by the creation of alternative institutions, MacKenzie took the view that any expansion should be confined to affiliates with the university. (p. 34)

A small Catholic institution, Notre Dame University College, did open in 1950 and affiliated in 1951 as a junior college of Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington. It affiliated with St. Francis Xavier University in Nova Scotia 1961 and then, in 1963, began offering BA degrees in its own name under a special charter of the BC legislature. Notre Dame closed in 1976.

A similar effort by Prince George’s bishop in 1962 was less successful. In Langley, the seventeen students in the first class of Trinity Western Junior College, also established in 1962 under the auspices of the Evangelical Free Church of America, formed the basis of what developed into Trinity Western University in 1985.

## ***Macdonald Era, 1961 - 1987***

### **Macdonald Report, 1962**

#### INTRODUCTION

The single most important document in the history of BC postsecondary education is *Higher Education in British Columbia and a Plan for the Future*, issued in 1962 under the auspices of the incoming president of UBC, John Barfoot Macdonald. It galvanized public and government opinion to the extent that two new universities and an entire college system were established in short order. Partly a response to the baby boom and rising educational aspirations, the report tapped into some unmet expectations of the previous two decades. It represented a complete departure from Macdonald’s predecessor, “Larry” MacKenzie’s, approach to postsecondary expansion.

As executive director of the now defunct BC Association of Colleges, Frank Beinder argued that the roots of the Macdonald Report stretch back to Maxwell Cameron’s *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Educational Finances* of 1945:

It might be argued that preceding the college movement in British Columbia by some twenty years and resulting from a study of public

school finances, the Cameron report is irrelevant to colleges. However, it testified to an emerging concern for equality of opportunity in education. Furthermore, it did not emanate from the isolated fastness of bureaucrats and politicians. It was a bottom-up testimony...The massive exercise which reduced the number of school districts in British Columbia from 649 to 74 was motivated as much by public concern for equality of educational opportunity in a changing world as by the inefficiencies and inequities in the funding process.

- Frank Beinder, 1983, p. 3

The concern for equitable education opportunity across the vast geography of the province was reflected in 1958 amendments to the Public Schools Act, enabling school boards to establish colleges on the condition they were affiliated with UBC. No action ensued from this legislation, nor from the 1960 proposals of the *Royal Commission on Education* that the Grade 13 program be widely expanded throughout the province.

The BC School Trustees Association had struck a committee in the late 1950s to consider their responsibility in the field of continuing education, given growing enrolments in Grade 13 and in upgrading and applied courses at night school. Inequitable geographic access to postsecondary institutions was a growing concern across the province and class distinctions were changing.

*The importance of the Macdonald Report (as it is now commonly called) to the future of higher education in British Columbia, and for that matter to all of Canada, cannot be over-emphasized. In clear, unmistakable terms, and perhaps for the first time in the history of Canadian education, a university president set out a plan for the future.*

- Andrew Soles,  
1968, p. 59

This was the context facing Macdonald when he became president of UBC, leading him to examine what he considered the urgent problem of increased demand for higher education and the need to decentralize it.

## FEDERAL FUNDING FOR TECHNICAL FACILITIES

Another important backdrop to the Macdonald Report is the national *Technical and Vocational Training Assistance Act* of 1960. The federal government agreed, for up to six years, to reimburse each province 75% of the cost of new buildings and equipment to a limit based on the population, and thereafter at 50% of cost. The 1960s became the key decade for the founding of vocational schools, including:

- 1962 Prince George  
Additions in Vancouver
- 1964 Kelowna  
Additions in Nanaimo
- 1964 Nelson (incorporating the Kootenay School of Art)

By the end of the decade, ten vocational schools were distributed throughout the province, all of which were subsequently to become important in the development of the

community college and institute system. This federal funding was also used to establish the BC Institute of Technology in 1964.

The timing of the establishment and the location of the vocational schools was determined almost entirely by the premier of the province, W.A.C. Bennett. Additional federal funds could have been obtained, but they were declined on the grounds that the province did not want to incur the associated operating costs.

During the 1960s, some close ties emerged between the BC Ministries of Education and of Labour. The Ministry of Labour had the responsibility for apprenticeship training in designated trades, including the setting of curriculum, but the programs were delivered under contract by the Ministry of Education. This involvement of a non-educational Ministry in apprenticeship education has continued in various forms to the present day.

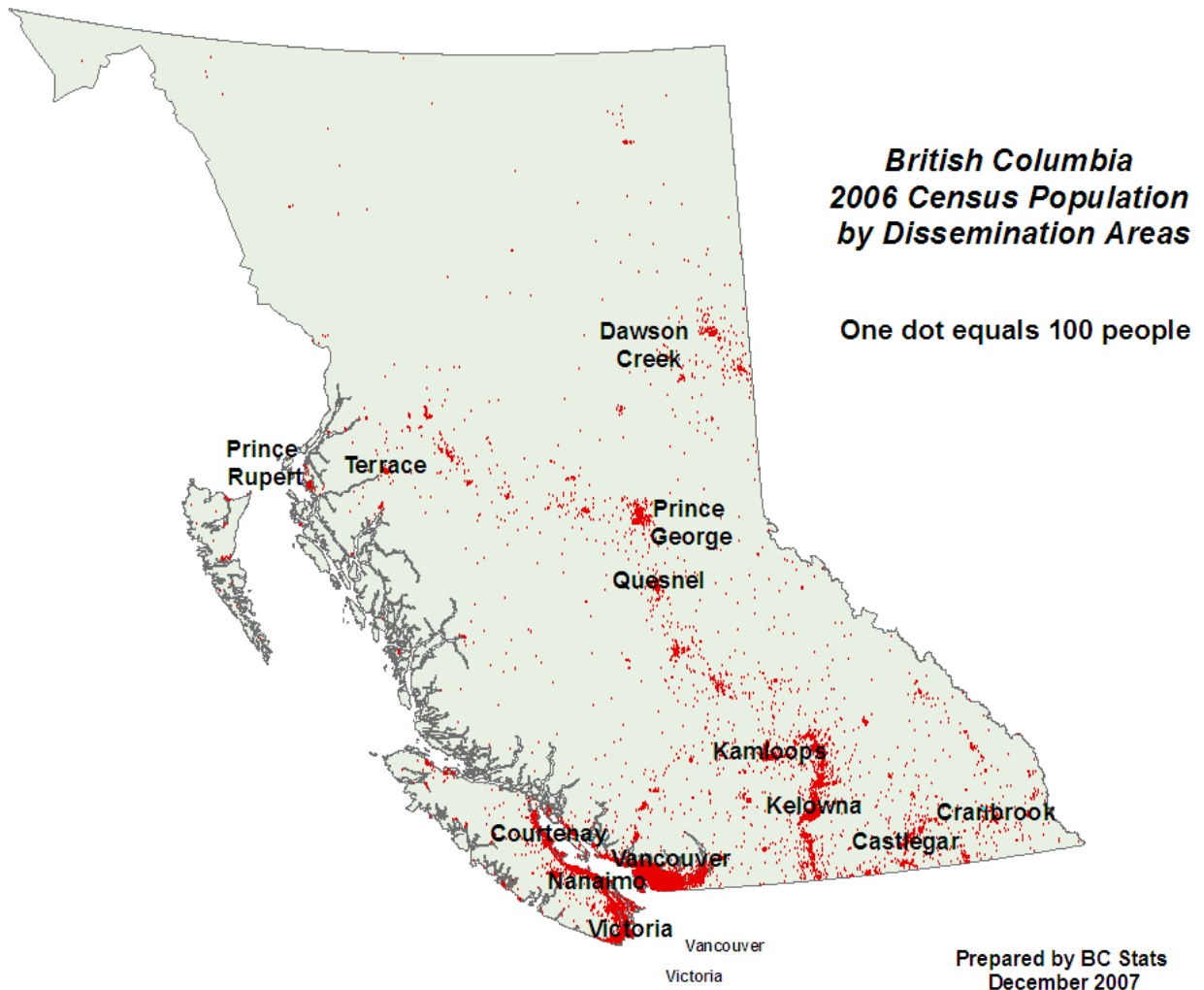
## GOVERNMENTAL RESPONSE

John Macdonald's 1962 report drew upon the work of a number of educational planners in the province and served as the catalyst that brought a coordinated response to pressures that had been building for several years. It led to the creation of two research universities, Simon Fraser University and the University of Victoria, by 1965 and 14 community colleges by 1975.

The actions resulting from the Macdonald Report came at a time when the province was booming and were more or less consistent with the report's proposals. Macdonald had suggested that UBC remain the only research-intensive university with graduate studies. In addition, he proposed:

- A four-year degree-granting college in the western Lower Fraser Valley, perhaps near Burnaby Lake, and giving Victoria College the option of becoming an independent degree-granting college.
- Two-year colleges throughout the province. The first of these colleges should serve the interior of BC at Kelowna, with the expectation that it become a four-year degree-granting college by 1970, and at Castlegar. The third college could be in Vancouver. Later, by 1971, other regional colleges might be set up to serve central Vancouver Island, the eastern Fraser Valley, Kamloops and Prince George.
- An Academic Board, with members appointed by government, UBC and Victoria College, advise the colleges on curricular matters and act as an accrediting agency.
- A Grants Commission to distribute funds for higher education among the institutions, with the proviso that the regional colleges be financed in part by the communities they were to serve.

When the legislature's new *Universities Act* came into effect on July 1, 1963, it provided for three universities, not one university and two four-year colleges. Along with an Academic Board and an advisory board about grants, a Joint Board of Teacher Education was retained with wider representation to advise universities and the Minister of Education.



Finally, amendments to the *Public Schools Act* provided for regional colleges. These amendments were enabling legislation that required plebiscites at the community level before any college could open, a more cautious approach than for the new universities.

## Universities

The immediate impact of the Macdonald Report was to change the face of university education in the province. Changes in the non-university sector occurred over a period of a decade.

### THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Because UBC was already well established, the Macdonald Report did not directly affect the university. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that UBC had only really changed its identity from a largely undergraduate university to a more comprehensive university in the previous decade. For example, when UBC's Faculty of Graduate Studies was formed

in 1947/48, doctoral programs were offered only in Physics, Zoology, Biology and Botany. Master's programs were available in Arts, Science, Social Work, Applied Science and Agriculture.

The postwar period saw continuous development at UBC, filling in gaps and extending into more graduate programming. By 1970, UBC was a comprehensive research university with 12 faculties, 8 schools and over 60 departments.

## UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA

Nomadic Victoria College had purchased 55 hectare of the Gordon Head Military Camp in 1959 to relieve overcrowding on the Lansdowne campus and had turned sod in 1962 for the first new building at Gordon Head. (Royal Roads University, Northern Lights College and some other institutions also have campuses located on former military bases.) The official birthday of the University of Victoria was July 1, 1963, with sod turned for the library the following day.

With legislation authorizing all BC universities to offer graduate degrees, UVic enrolled master's students from the beginning. It embraced a traditional educational model and sought, unsuccessfully, to divide itself into colleges of approximately one thousand students, 30% in residences, in order to promote a greater sense of student identity.

## SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Whereas UBC and UVic had lengthy gestations, SFU was BC's "instant university." Premier W.A.C. Bennett wanted the new university to open its doors in 27 months.

With five competing sites in Surrey, Burnaby and Delta, but no selection criteria or budget guidelines, the site chosen on Burnaby Mountain consisted of land donated by the municipality of Burnaby and some additional land from the province. An architectural competition, open only to BC architects, was organized with design concepts to be submitted within four weeks.

When SFU opened its doors in 1965, the trimester academic year was a marked departure from the prevailing Canadian norm of an eight-month winter session. A second distinctive characteristic was a tutorial mode of instruction, supplementing large lectures with small groupings of students and making extensive use of teaching assistants. Finally, the fledgling university sought to fill a distinctive niche in North American higher education through some interdisciplinary and non-traditional departmental organization.

Not only did SFU adopt a radical educational philosophy, but campus life reflected the radical student politics of the era. One of the first student confrontations with administration concerned what students viewed as inadequate transfer credit arrangements from community colleges.

*Premier Bennett had calculated the political advantage he could get out of an expansion of higher education. That led him to scatter his largesse in a way that left Macdonald, and other members of the public system, a little disappointed. Since forming his first government, Bennett had established a pattern of calling an election every three years. He was therefore conscious of three-year cycles of accomplishment: what could he tell voters that he had done during his last mandate?*

*Bennett's last election had been in 1960, and at the beginning of 1963 he was aiming for the vote that he would eventually call for September 30. The creation of two new public universities would be a major part of his record.*

*- Hugh Johnston, 2005, p. 30*

## Community Colleges

### EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

John Macdonald, influenced by California's three-tier system of higher education with flagship research universities, primarily undergraduate and master's universities, and comprehensive community colleges, had proposed that BC's two-year colleges should offer a combination of technical and career programs, along with academic courses that could be transferred to university. The provincial government concurred with the notion of comprehensive colleges, enshrining university transfer programming in the legislation, in contrast to the lack of academic programming that typifies so many colleges in other parts of Canada, except for Alberta and to some extent Quebec.

### SCHOOL BOARD ORIGINS

Macdonald had recommended school board involvement in regional colleges. The 1963 enabling legislation for the creation of colleges was an extension to the *Public Schools Act* and guaranteed school boards the majority voice on college councils. With a tax-driven local contribution which, together with student fees, was to account for about half the operating budget, a plebiscite was necessary in each of the cooperating school districts to confirm community support for the proposed colleges. Dennison (1997) observes:

“Given the degree of community leadership and time-consuming procedures required to establish colleges, it was not surprising that British Columbia's new postsecondary institutions came to fruition one by one. Ten were eventually established by the mid-seventies when the procedure for creating a college was changed.”

- p. 38

In smaller cities in particular, the plebiscites and connections with local school boards fostered a vibrant linkage between the community and the college. Beinder, ever



suspicious of central bureaucratic control, proudly described the early years of the BC college system as “truly a citizen movement.”

A less positive result of the local plebiscites was that capital funding was less readily passed for the newly established institutions. The failure of a referendum in the Okaganan region in 1966, in particular, stimulated the concept of starting college operations in temporary or shared facilities. Furthermore, provincial politicians seem to have assumed colleges would operate in existing school facilities, using existing equipment. This was a weak assumption, and college classes often began instead in church basements, vacant commercial buildings, warehouses or similar types of facilities with floor spaces that could be adapted to instructional use.

#### *COMMUNITY COLLEGE PHILOSOPHY*

*As an educational enterprise, a community college finds its uniqueness in three fundamental concepts. The first of these is the so-called “open door” policy. The college offers an open door to every adult citizen who genuinely wishes to upgrade his educational qualifications. And it opens the door to him regardless of his academic background or experience, and at an economic cost which is generally well within his means.*

*The term “open door” is, I suspect, quite widely misunderstood. It does not, of course, imply automatic admission to every programme offered by the colleges. Obviously there are pre-requisites which have to be met – but it does imply open admission to the college where a student can either enter the programme directly if he does have the pre-requisites – or can take the pre-requisite courses he needs. It also means that he can proceed with further education without having to climb over a number of hurdles, some of which are more administrative than educational....*

*The second fundamental concept is that the community college is a fully comprehensive institution – rather rare in post-secondary education. It combines with equal emphasis high standards of excellence in university transfer courses, one- and two-year technical courses of a level comparable to those offered at BCIT, realistic and practical courses in occupational or vocational education, up-grading programmes, remedial programmes, preparatory programmes and community service programmes....*

*The final concept is implicit in the whole area of community service. The colleges are committed to serve – and I want to underscore that word – the communities in which they are centred. Their dedication must be, as it is, to improve in every way they can, the quality of life of their region....All of the colleges now in operation have strong community oriented programmes and I think it can be said quite honestly that the presence of a college in a region has added a whole new and exciting dimension to community life.*

*- Andrew Soles, speech given  
in the late 1970s*

*(Founding principal of Selkirk College and  
subsequent provincial Assistant Deputy Minister)*

In 1965, the Academic Board of Higher Education in BC summarized the college educational philosophy as follows:

“The colleges have two broad purposes. The first is to provide within a single educational milieu a variety of educational opportunities for students of different abilities, talents and interests. The second is to extend more widely the opportunity for young people throughout the Province to continue their education after graduation from secondary school.

The first of these broad purposes implies much more than merely having both academic and technical or other programmes carried out in the same institution. A college should be regarded as a unique educational setting wherein academic and technical fields can be merged in ways that are not open to other post-secondary institutions...the colleges can promote a distinctive type of higher education....

*- The Role of District and Regional Colleges in the BC System of Higher Education, January 1965*

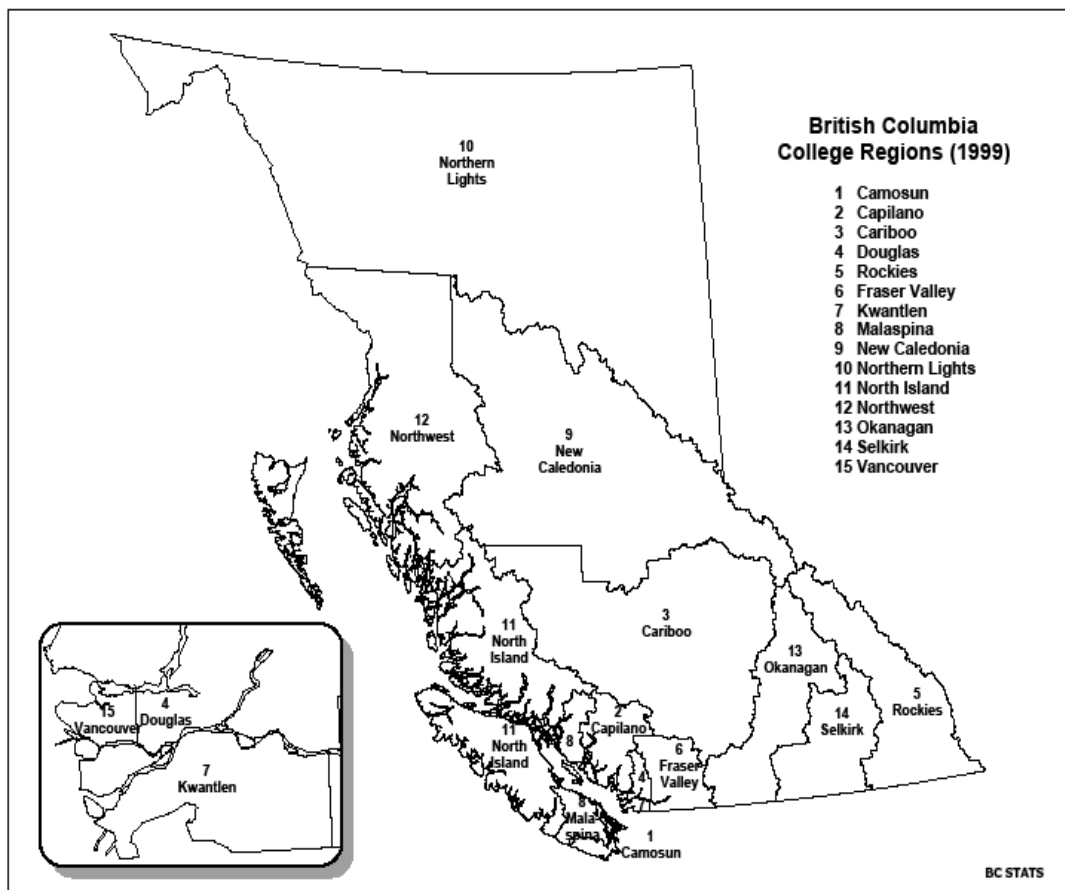
Modest tuition fees and an open admission philosophy (to the institution, not to all programs and courses) rounded out the college educational philosophy of geographical and social access, community responsiveness, and interdisciplinary and integrated curriculum.

#### MELDING WITH VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS, 1971

In 1971, the provincial government began to merge the province's ten vocational schools (Victoria, Nanaimo, Vancouver, Burnaby, Prince George, Terrace, Dawson Creek, Kamloops, Kelowna, and Nelson) into the emerging community college system. Motivated by a comprehensive educational philosophy that sought to equalize the status of vocational and academic education, and to provide a better opportunity for more general education in job training, the mergers also had the practical benefit of providing the colleges with access to permanent educational facilities.

The only school not so melded was the BC Vocational School in Burnaby. It eventually became the Pacific Vocational Institute and was subsequently absorbed by its neighbour, BCIT, in 1986.

Some faculty resisted the mergers. Vocational instructors feared their programs would get short shrift in comprehensive colleges. Some academic instructors resented being in the same category as vocational educators. As occurred years later in some university colleges where some tensions emerged between upper and lower division instructors, the new institutions were an uneasy alliance of employees with differing values and aspirations.



#### DECADE OF DEVELOPMENT, 1965 – 1975

Vancouver City College, later renamed Vancouver Community College, opened in September, 1965 (paralleling the opening of SFU and the University of Victoria). It represented a coordination of pre-existing programs at the Vancouver Vocational Institute, the Vancouver School of Art, and the Vancouver School Board's King Edward Centre for Continuing Education. A new campus, Langara, was planned to house new academic transfer and career programs. (Langara opened in 1970 and then split from Vancouver Community College as an institution in its own right in 1994.)

Other colleges were created in steady succession over the ensuing decade, sometimes drawing upon precursor adult education operations of local school districts. All of the following colleges were formed on the basis of local efforts rather than by provincial edict.

<b>Year</b>	<b>College</b>	<b>Main Campus</b>
1965	Vancouver	Vancouver
1966	Selkirk	Castlegar
1968	Capilano	North Vancouver
	Okanagan	Kelowna
1969	Malaspina	Nanaimo
	New Caledonia	Prince George
1970	Douglas (includes what is now Kwantlen)	New Westminster
	Cariboo (now Thompson Rivers University)	Kamloops
1971	Camosun	Victoria
1974	Fraser Valley	Abbotsford

In November 1973, the Minister of Education launched the *Task Force on the Community College* that looked at the needs of isolated communities. This led to the establishing of four rural colleges in 1975 without the need for local plebiscites.

<b>College</b>	<b>Main Campus</b>
Northwest	Terrace
North Island	Comox (headquarters for distance education programs)
Northern Lights	Dawson Creek
East Kootenay (now College of the Rockies)	Cranbrook

#### AN ACT OF THEIR OWN, 1977

In 1977, the new *College and Provincial Institutes Act* – the first time the colleges had operated under their own act – established three intermediary bodies between the colleges and the government:

- Academic Council
- Occupational Training Council
- Management Advisory Council

These councils were dissolved in 1983 and their functions absorbed by the postsecondary division of the Ministry of Education.

*RECRUITING FACULTY FOR NEW COMMUNITY COLLEGES*

*Reflections of former presidents of Douglas College in the Douglas College Twentieth Anniversary Publication, 1990:*

*Many faculty came here because they were young and were looking for their first teaching job. The average age of the faculty was 30 or 31. Most administrators were between 35 and 36. We were just kids.*

*- William Day*

*It wasn't a university with a publish or perish philosophy. We looked for people who had some real experience in the world, not someone who had spend 20 years doing graduate degrees, post-graduate degrees and had never really practiced their trade. We had a fellow who headed up one of the departments who was a philosopher. He had also been a minister, a professional football player and several other things. These were the kind of people we tried to hire.*

*- George Wooton*

*Reflections of a charter Douglas College faculty member:*

*After my obligatory kick around Europe, after completing my degree, I was totally broke and freshly married, and heard of this new college going up. So, getting out my map to find out where downtown New Westminster was, I found myself at the basement of an address on Columbia Street, below a shoe store. It was a hive of activity.*

*Soon after I was hired, I noticed a huge table covered in shoeboxes. We were all asked to bring in our shoe box with our name on it, so they could put our mail in it.*

*- Alan McMillan, Anthropology*

The new act established college boards as separate legal entities, no longer simple agents of schools boards that required school board approval for budgets, facilities and the like. The province assumed operating costs from local taxpayers and college faculty were given a legal means of participating in the development of curriculum and educational policy. The number of elected school trustees on college boards was reduced and eventually, in 1983, all members of college and institute boards became appointed by the provincial cabinet. (With respect to academic governance, it was not until 1994 that Education Councils, the college counterpart to university Senates, were mandated in legislation.)

## Institutes

Institutes differed from colleges in that they were to serve students from across the province, rather than primarily from the local region, and in that their curriculum was to focus on particular applied fields or to be delivered in distinctive ways:

BC Institute of Technology (first students enrolled in 1964)

– technical programs intended to lead directly to jobs

Emily Carr Institute of Art (as it was then named. It was founded in 1925 but established in its current form in 1978)

– visual arts

Justice Institute (established in 1978)

– public safety

Open Learning Institute (established in 1978)

- distance education, including degrees

Pacific Marine Training Institute (established in 1978. Originated in 1930 as the private Vancouver School of Navigation. Became a public institution in 1938. Absorbed into BCIT in 1994)

– navigation and marine engineering

Pacific Vocational Institute (amalgamation in 1978 of the BC Vocational School and operations in Maple Ridge and Sea Island)

– programs up to one year in duration, including apprenticeship preparation

## Non-Metropolitan Programs

The new community colleges mitigated, but did not eliminate, calls for greater efforts to take education to the people. A royal commission investigated *Post-Secondary Education in the Kootenay Region* in 1974 and the 1976 Winegard Report on university programs in non-metropolitan areas proposed a multi-campus university to serve the BC interior.

When Notre Dame University in Nelson closed in 1976, the provincial government eventually obtained the premises and established the David Thompson University Centre. The Centre offered mainly Fine Arts and Education courses, operated jointly by Selkirk College and the University of Victoria. It was closed in 1984, with the government citing high costs for a small number of students served.

Two other strategies emerged in the late seventies for serving isolated populations. Patricia Carney's 1977 study, *Report of the Distance Education Planning Group on a Delivery System for Distance Education in BC*, led to the establishment the following year of the Open Learning Institute. The first principal of the institute, later renamed the Open Learning Agency, sought to emulate a number of aspects of Britain's Open University.

Government created the Knowledge Network of the West, an educational delivery system on cable television, in 1979 to broadcast courses developed by other organizations, as well as to broadcast general interest programming. It was brought under the auspices of the Open Learning Agency in 1988. The Knowledge Network survived the breakup of the Open Learning Agency that stretched throughout 2006 to the June, 2007 departure of OLA's last employees involved in educational delivery.

The second strategy was designated funding from the government for universities to deliver courses and entire programs in cities outside the Lower Mainland and southern Vancouver Island, courses not offered by the local colleges.

Despite these initiatives, certain communities outside southwestern BC continued to advocate for local institutions to deliver upper division academic courses in their community. This advocacy set the stage for significant developments in the late eighties.

## Continuing Education

Although legislation mandated postsecondary institutions to provide it, the definition of continuing education in BC is elusive. Some institutions consider credit courses to fall under the continuing education umbrella if the course fees cover at least the direct costs of instruction; others restrict continuing education to non-credit courses. Government policy has varied over the years regarding grants and subsidies for continuing education, and government data collection in this area has been on and off over the years.

Continuing education has been an ephemeral, poorly documented, but important, activity over the decades. The last major report on this topic seems to have been the 1976 *Report*

of the Committee on Continuing Education in BC. In that report, Faris recommended the province adopt the now mainstream concept of lifelong learning.

SFU used continuing education as the vehicle to bring university classes to downtown Vancouver, leveraging vacated commercial space to create the self-sustaining Harbour Centre in 1989. BCIT expanded its downtown Vancouver presence in 1997 with a new building of its own, leasing out surplus space to a variety of tenants. UBC followed suit in 2001 with space in Robson Square.

## **Untidy Complexity, 1988 - 2006**

*The changes that have taken place over the last decade [the 1990s] in BC's post-secondary education system have been substantial and unique in their sweep when compared to the rest of Canada. They have been the result of a massive demand for post-secondary education and of great efforts by successive governments to respond to it.*

*- Schuetze and Day, 2001, p. 7*

Development of the BC postsecondary system from the mid sixties to the mid eighties was largely one of expansion along a single trajectory, namely a bifurcated system of universities and non-degree granting institutions. More institutions were created, enrolment and program offerings grew, gaps were filled, but by and large, the same philosophies and approaches guided the developments. During the next twenty years, however, pathways diverged, twisted and became more complex.

As an example of the growing complexity, the donation of land in Vancouver led to the

creation in 2000 of the Great Northern Way Campus by UBC, SFU, BCIT and the Emily Carr Institute of Art + Design in a consortium arrangement. (The first students enrolled in full programs of study in 2007.) Another example is the awarding of degrees by out-of-province universities or by BC university colleges to students who completed their entire program of studies at a BC college.

## **New Institutions**

### UNIVERSITIES

Three new universities of varying non-traditional form were established since the late eighties. They were in response to differing circumstances, and one lasted for only a few years. In addition, as described later, one university college was transformed in 2006 into a "special purpose" university.

Local politics played a significant role in these developments, with much of the evolving nature of the postsecondary system driven more by politics than by strategic planning on the part of government.



### University of Northern British Columbia

In competition with residents of Kelowna and Kamloops, residents of Prince George advocated vigorously in the late eighties for a university of their own. Presenting their case only partly as an educational access issue, they emphasized the role a university would play in community and economic development. Despite the misgivings of government officials and some educators about the sustainability of a small university serving a small population, the government decided in 1990 to create a new university, in addition to the local college, the College of New Caledonia. The new institution, the University of Northern British Columbia, opened in 1994. It was to work jointly with the four northern colleges and to focus on the distinct needs of northern society.

The understanding at that time of government officials was that the government grant per student would be capped at a third above the grant to the three existing universities in the metropolitan southwest. University colleges, described below, were shortly thereafter designated for other small interior cities.

### Royal Roads University

The federal government's closing of a small military university, Royal Roads Military College, located on a historic estate outside Victoria made some very desirable real estate available in the early nineties. The provincial government moved to protect the site by establishing Royal Roads University in 1995, making it clear from the outset that operating grants would be limited and that it expected RRU to develop distinctive niche, self-supporting programming. Administrative structures that differed from the other provincial universities were intended to help RRU fulfill this mandate.

RRU responded to the constraints set by government, and to its small scale facilities, by targeting mid career adults and transfer students, charging what by Canadian standards are relatively high tuition fees, and adopting a mixed mode delivery system of distance education interspersed with periods in residence. It essentially incorporated a continuing education philosophy throughout its credit offerings.

### Technical University of BC

The Technical University was something of a shooting star in the educational firmament: unexpected, spectacular but short lived. Created with its own act in 1997 as a response to the rapidly growing population south of the Fraser River in the Lower Mainland but with little public discussion, it was located in leased space in a Surrey mall and sought to deliver innovative technical education in fields that rely heavily on computers.

The curriculum was indeed innovative, but before the first class of students had graduated, a new government decided to dissolve Tech U. After asking for expressions of interest, the government awarded the programs and students to SFU, and thus SFU's Surrey campus was established in 2002.

## ABORIGINAL INSTITUTIONS

In 1995, the provincial cabinet approved the *Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Policy Framework*. This led to the designation that same year of two small institutions as provincial institutes: the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology in Merritt (founded in 1983 as a private institution) and the Institute of Indigenous Government in Vancouver. In 2007, the government gave NVIT responsibility for the IIG and the IIG ceased to exist as a separate entity.

## Transformed Institutions

### UNIVERSITY COLLEGES

The provincial government's Access Committee concluded in 1988 that BC needed 15,000 new seats for students in order to meet national postsecondary norms. It noted that access was particularly difficult for those living in rural and remote areas, and for selected groups such as aboriginals. The committee recommended that outside the more densely populated Lower Mainland and southern Vancouver Island, upper-level university college components be added to the existing college system.

In 1989, the province designated Okanagan, Cariboo and Malaspina colleges as university colleges. In partnership with BC universities, the university colleges were authorized to offer baccalaureate programs for which the partner university would grant degrees. The partnership with universities was intended to be an interim step, leading to the university colleges granting their own degrees in a few years' time.

In 1990 and 1995 respectively, Fraser Valley and Kwantlen colleges were also designated as university colleges. This designation came as something of a surprise to Fraser Valley College, requiring it to hastily revise its almost completed strategic plan. Kwantlen's degree-granting powers were originally restricted to applied fields other than Arts and Science.

Kwantlen and Fraser Valley university colleges were government's response, followed later by the Technical University of BC, to the longstanding demands of citizens for a university south of the Fraser River. When Kwantlen became a university college, the former arguments for university colleges being created to meet regional needs for degrees no longer held true. This began in earnest the drive from other Lower Mainland institutions for degree-granting status.

The World War I era university college of McGill in Vancouver notwithstanding, the university college model was largely unfamiliar to most Canadians. Questions arose about the public's acceptance of the quality of university college degrees, the status of preparatory and vocational programs, and the workload and scholarly expectations of upper-division instructors.

## SPLITS

Centrifugal forces started to emerge in the 1980s and grew in intensity during the nineties, fragmenting and complicating the postsecondary system. Some of the consequences included the splitting of institutions.

Kwantlen and Douglas College had initially been intended as separate institutions, but the government of the day had forced them together in 1970. Unwieldy and serving a population divided by the Fraser River, Kwantlen College was carved from Douglas College in 1981.

Langara College was originally a campus of Vancouver Community College, offering academic and technical education that had a distinct culture and financial needs from the vocational and preparatory education at VCC's other two campuses. Langara seceded from VCC in 1994.

Okanagan University College renewed its lobbying in the late nineties for university status, with the advocacy especially pronounced among faculty at the north Kelowna campus that had been built in the early nineties to house its university transfer offerings. The government responded differently than it did in single-campus Kamloops, severing the north campus from Okanagan University College in 2005 and transferring it to UBC. The south campus, and satellite campuses throughout the Okanagan region, remained as Okanagan College.

## SPECIAL PURPOSE UNIVERSITY

Unlike Langara College and UBC Okanagan where entire campuses were devoted largely to academic programming, the Kamloops campus of the University College of the Cariboo offered a comprehensive range of programs. The government responded to political pressure for a university in Kamloops by designating the university college, soon renamed Thompson Rivers University (TRU), as a "special purpose" university, one that was to emphasize undergraduate teaching and which provided a rich array of non-university programming.

The government used the creation of TRU in 2005 to transfer the Open University and Open College divisions of the Open Learning Agency (based in Burnaby) to TRU in Kamloops. Other smaller functions of OLA, such as the international credential assessment service, went to BCIT. The Knowledge Network survived as its own entity, to become incorporated in its own right once the OLA legislation is repealed.

## YET MORE DEGREE-GRANTING INSTITUTIONS

A distinctive credential that BCIT was authorized to grant in 1994, and one which no other BC institution offers, is the Bachelor of Technology degree. It was also in 1994 that the Emily Carr Institute of Art + Design was authorized to grant degrees in its own name.

Paralleling trends in Ontario and Alberta, but unexpectedly as far as many BC educators were concerned, the 2002 *Degree Authorization Act*, enabled all BC colleges to grant

applied degrees. It also expanded the authority of university colleges to offer self-funded applied master's degrees.

The BC government originally envisaged applied degrees as three-years of terminal study, followed by a year's internship paid by industry. This concept had been implemented in some other provinces but received scant support in BC where a strong academic tradition was present in the province's colleges. Soon applied degrees were understood in BC to mean traditional four-year baccalaureate degrees in applied fields (albeit that the curriculum and delivery methods might be non-traditional.)

Most of BC's two dozen public postsecondary institutions now have the power to offer bachelor's programming. The number of such programs in former community colleges remains small but it is continually growing as needs assessments are conducted, curriculum developed, and quality assurance standards met.

## **Private Institutions**

This history concerns publicly funded institutions. Paralleling the public system is a private sector characterized by hundreds of small institutions, mostly career colleges, English language schools, and trainers for particular occupations such as hairdressing. Most, but not all, of these 800 or so institutions are for profit.

At the university level, private not-for-profit institutions include Trinity Western University (opened in 1962 as a junior college) and UBC's affiliated graduate schools of theology (Vancouver School of Theology, Regent College, and St. Mark's College) and a sprinkling of Bible colleges. Most of these institutions operate under their own special legislation, often introduced as private members bills.

For-profit universities, such as City University, began operations in the 1980s in BC by offering instruction in particular subjects in small, leased facilities but awarding their degrees from headquarters outside BC. Other institutions from outside the province had occasionally offered courses in BC, but they did not have dedicated campuses in BC.

Government policy changes in the years following 2001 were designed to encourage the growth of BC's private postsecondary sector. Language schools were deregulated, greater self-regulation was permitted among career colleges, and a means was established for private universities to incorporate in BC without requiring special legislation for each. While government operating and capital grants are not awarded to private institutions, students at many private institutions are eligible for governmental student financial aid to pay tuition and other educational expenses.

# Provincial Government and Agency Backdrop

*It must also be said that government policy towards postsecondary education has been erratic, unpredictable, and often unreadable....With respect to the university sector, the general approach from government has been non-interventionist....However, government influence over the college sector has been much more real, direct, and effective.*

*- John Dennison, 1997, p. 49*

## Ministries

The provincial government ministries, or what were previously called departments, responsible for postsecondary education have changed names and mandates to a fair degree in recent decades. In about 1986, the college and university sectors were brought together in a single ministry, Continuing Education and Job Training. This name was soon changed to Advanced Education and Job Training, and then to Advanced Education, Training and Technology.

In 1993, the Ministry was renamed Skills, Training and Labour and included K-12 education. By 1997, it was Education, Skills and Training. In 1998, the postsecondary sector again had its own ministry, Advanced Education, Training and Technology. Finally, in 2001, the name was shortened to Advanced Education, a name that has endured to the present.

Rather than going into specifics and nuances of the administrative structures and names of the ministries, this section will focus on the management philosophies whose legacy is still evident today.

BC universities have operated under their own legislation and, with certain financial and other boundaries, have generally been left by government to manage their own affairs. During the early eighties, they even came under the purview of their own ministry, the Ministry of Universities, Science and Communications. By the standards of western nations, BC universities fall on the more autonomous end of the spectrum.

Politicians and bureaucrats, on the other hand, have been treated colleges and institutes quite differently than universities. Colleges were established under the Public Schools Act and for many years reported to the Minister of Education, a ministry which exercised considerable central control on such topics as curriculum. While colleges were given

more latitude than schools, this reporting relationship continued even after the first college and institutes act was proclaimed. Government officials took a more hands-on approach with colleges than with universities, e.g. line item budgeting for colleges versus block grants to universities. In vocational education, especially, the practice at times verged on micromanagement by Victoria.

In 1986, colleges and universities were brought under one umbrella, but this time separated from K-12 education, in the new Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology. In the ensuing years, the bureaucracy's involvement in college affairs has tended to diminish, e.g. block funding replaced line item budgeting at the program level. The universities, in contrast, have experienced growing pressure and direction from the Ministry from time to time. Although still considerable, the difference in the Ministry's role with respect to the college sector compared to universities, has gradually diminished.

## Commissions and Key Reports, 1960 - Present

Government policy and practices regarding postsecondary education have at times been informed by high profile commissions and reports. Not all the recommendations were implemented, but the 1970s were an especially rich time for addressing postsecondary issues in the public arena.

Year	Author/Chair	Title
1960	Sperrin Chant	Royal Commission on Education Mainly concerned with elementary and secondary education but recommended expansion of Gr. 13 to more schools
1962	John Macdonald	Survey of Higher Education in British Columbia and a Plan for the Future Led to the creation of two universities and the college system
1969	Neil Perry	Advisory Committee on Inter-University Relations Recommended a new intermediary body to replace existing boards and councils
1974	Walter Young	Report of the University Governance Committee Led to the creation of the Universities Council and changes to university boards and senates
1974	Ian McTaggart-Cowan	Royal Commission on Post-Secondary Education in the Kootenay Region Recommended a new institute, with components including Selkirk College and a 4-year college to replace Notre Dame University of Nelson

1974	Hazel L'Estrange	Towards the Learning Community: Working Paper on the Community College in BC Led to government establishing four more colleges to serve rural areas and colleges obtaining independent corporate status
1975	Leonard Marsh	Report of the Survey Committee on Community Colleges in the Lower Mainland Concluded that vocational education should be equal to other programs, that adult and continuing education needed more study, and that Lower Mainland colleges should not be restricted by school district boundaries
1976	William Winegard	Report of the Commission on University Programs in Non-Metropolitan Areas Recommended a multi-campus university be established by 1990 to serve non-metropolitan areas, beginning as a separately funded division of SFU and headquartered in Vernon with four centres offering upper level degree completion in Arts, Science and Education
1976	Ron Faris	Report of the Committee on Continuing Education and Community Education in BC Recommended adoption of the lifelong learning concept and that a provincial Open College be established
1977	Dean Goard	Report of the Commission on Vocational, Technical and Trades Training in British Columbia Recommended establishment of an occupational training council
1977	Patricia Carney	Report of the Distance Education Planning Group on a Delivery System for Distance Education in BC Led to creation of the Open Learning Institute and the Knowledge Network educational television
1988	Grant Fisher	Access to Advanced Education and Job Training in British Columbia ("Access for All") Led to 15,000 new seats for the postsecondary sector
1994	Paul Gallagher	Skills Now: Real Skills for the Real World Focused on labour market needs, beginning in secondary school, and on retraining close to home

1996	Steering Committee appointed by Ministry of Education, Skills and Training	Charting a New Course A strategic plan for the College, institute and agency system
2007	Geoff Plant	Campus 2020 Proposed strategic directions for the next 10 to 15 years for the postsecondary system

## Apprenticeship Training

The short classroom components that apprentices complete in each year of their training are mainly provided by public colleges and institutes, but some private institutions are also involved. The on-the-job component is provided by employers and thus is greatly affected by labour market conditions.

Responsibility for apprenticeships has bounced around within government. Sometimes it is housed in educational ministries and sometimes in labour or economic development ministries. The lack of consensus about how to deal with apprenticeship training was reflected in the establishment of the Industry Training and Apprenticeship Commission (ITAC) in 1997 and then its replacement in 2004 by the Industry Training Authority.

Apprenticeship differs from other forms of postsecondary education in that external union and management interests tend to constrain and politicize efforts to change the system, and in that educators sometimes feel sidelined in curriculum discussions. In recent decades, the number of apprentices has fluctuated greatly but has generally been lower than the government desired.

## Councils

As with the Industry Training Authority mentioned in the Apprenticeship sector, government sometimes delegates certain of its functions to non-governmental organizations that it has created and funded for that purpose. The longevity of these bodies in the BC postsecondary system has been limited.

Three councils were created when the college system began: the Academic Board (dissolved in 1974), the Provincial Consultative Committee on Career Programmes, and the College Construction Consultative Committee. Their successors under the College and Provincial Institutes Act of 1977 were the Academic Council, the Occupational Training Council and the Management Advisory Council. The three councils were abolished in 1983 and their functions absorbed by the Ministry of Education.



Following the Perry and Young reports, the new Universities Act created the Universities Council of BC in 1974. With such responsibilities as new program approval, recommendation of capital projects, and allocation among institutions of the annual operating grant for universities, the Universities Council was explicitly intended to buffer universities from political interference by government. A number of other Canadian and American jurisdictions had their own version of an intermediary body, but the Universities Council of BC was dissolved in 1987.

*It is the contention of this observer that British Columbia has developed a system of higher education which has been articulated and coordinated to a somewhat greater extent than is the case in other Canadian provinces, with the exception of Quebec and, perhaps, Alberta.*

*- John Dennison, 1997, p. 51*

## Agencies

Along with councils, government has occasionally created agencies, that is, bodies with specific mandates involving relatively small sums of money and which have more of a facilitating role than a directing role. These are a new organizational form in BC postsecondary education, having emerged over the past two decades.

The first agency was the BC Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT) in 1989, arising from a recommendation of the 1988 Access Committee. BCCAT formalized the BC Post-Secondary Articulation Coordinating Committee that had been established around 1974 to serve the discipline-specific articulation committees which, in turn, had formed over the previous years to facilitate student transfer from college to university. Serving as a catalyst and providing infrastructure for the voluntary coordination of numerous topics concerning student movement into and among colleges, universities and institutes, the council is being called upon to address increasingly complex issues.

The Centre for Education Information Standards and Services (CEISS) and the Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology (C2T2) opened in 1996 by devolving functions and staff from the Ministry, and amalgamating various disparate groups and initiatives outside the Ministry. They grew rapidly to take on their own personalities but were wound down in 2004 when a new government came to power.

A surviving component of C2T2 is BCcampus, a collaboration of online courses from across the province that government intends as single point of contact for students. The Postsecondary Application Service of BC (PASBC) predates BCcampus, having been established in the early nineties, then being moved to CEISS before being transferred to BCcampus in 2004.

## Advocacy Groups

Many special interest groups exist in BC postsecondary education, e.g. the Confederation of University Faculty Associations. This section will describe only groups where the members represent their entire institution or sector.

With the demise of the Universities Council of BC in 1987, the universities formed the Tri Universities Presidents Council as an advocacy group to government and staffed a small office. With the creation of the University of Northern British Columbia and subsequent new universities, the name was changed to The University Presidents Council. As well as speaking on behalf of the sector, the council has taken on some functions with government funding, e.g. conducting a survey of university graduates each year.

The story in the college sector is more complex. In the absence of any government coordination, the BC School Trustees Association formed the Regional and District College Association of BC (RDCABC) in 1966. It evolved into the BC Association of Colleges (BCAC) around 1970. BCAC was constituted under legislation in about 1976 and amalgamated with the Council of College Presidents in 1992 to form the Advanced Education Council of BC. Active and influential for many years, the Advanced Education Council eventually disbanded in 2002, contributing factors including the decision of the university colleges to form their own group. BCIT and ECIAD withdrew shortly thereafter from participation with colleges. The presidents of the remaining colleges subsequently formed their own group, the BC College Presidents, but no provincial forum has since existed for college boards.

The group of university college presidents became less vocal as individual institutions sought, and sometimes received, university status. The result of the fragmentation is that the college, university college and institute sector has had a much weaker and fragmented voice than the universities in the current decade.

## Comparison with Other Provinces

Universities across Canada are fairly similar. The differences in the college and institute sector, however, are profound, with the result that BC has by far the most differentiated postsecondary system in Canada.

The concept of a strong university transfer component in colleges was imported from the USA in the 1960s. Except for Alberta, other provinces have at best put only a toe in this water. While the structure of BC colleges resembles those of community colleges in the western states, the American two-year institutions tend to serve more disadvantaged and career-oriented populations than the cross-section of the population who come to BC colleges.

*British Columbia has taken the California model and developed it into what is possibly the most extensive credit accumulation and transfer arrangement in the world.*

*- Higher Education Policy Institute, United Kingdom, 2004  
(cited in BC Council on Admissions and Transfer Annual Report, 2004/05, p. 13)*

Saskatchewan, Manitoba and the Atlantic provinces have focused their colleges almost exclusively on the workplace, in contrast to BC's blend of academic and career education. Ontario used to have a sharp divide between academic education, offered only at university, and the career, technical and basic upgrading education that the Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology provided. Some pathways for Ontario's college students into university undergraduate programs are emerging, but entry to graduate study is not always an option from the applied degrees that Ontario authorized its colleges to confer in the late nineties. (Alberta's new college degrees were introduced as three-year, terminal applied degrees. They are being turned into 4-year programs that will be comparable to university baccalaureate degrees.)

Quebec makes one year of study mandatory at its colleges, the CEGEPs, following departure from secondary school at the end of Grade 11. Degree-bound student take further study at the CEGEP and then enter a university. Other students have the option of leaving college after one year or of taking further technical or vocational education at the CEGEP.

## Conclusion

Five themes characterizing the development of BC public postsecondary education are relevant to its potential evolution in the future:

- Challenge of providing geographic access to non-metropolitan populations

The province's three largest universities are clustered in the southwest, one at the end of peninsula, another on the top of a mountain, and the third on an island. (The precedent for this isolation was set soon after World War I when UBC was explicitly sited far from what was seen as the potentially corrupting influence of Vancouver's downtown. It was not until the 1980s that SFU, BCIT and UBC began obtaining sites for small presences in the central business district.)

The establishment of community colleges and the subsequent transformation of some into university colleges and a special purpose university in Kamloops, the varying amounts of university outreach through non-metropolitan programming,

and the government's willingness to embrace distributed education are all manifestations of the theme of providing geographical access.

- A trailblazing college sector

When it created colleges in the 1960s, BC departed from Canadian and British norms in favour of the American model of comprehensive colleges that each offered a wide breadth of programs, from upgrading and vocational education through technical programs to academic education. BC then put its own stamp on the colleges through such developments as the university college and the offering of baccalaureate degrees at all institutions.

Although perhaps as much the result of geography and a relatively small undergraduate capacity in its universities as the result of good educational planning, BC colleges have been as successful as any in the world in serving a heterogeneous student body.

*Enthusiastic college supporters are prone to refer to the community college idea as the community college 'movement'. It's been suggested that 'movement' is a term applied to missionary activity, implying emotional fervour divorced from practicalities. The citizens who fought for the establishment of their community colleges don't mind that. Most would concede that there was truly an element of missionary concern in what they did. They were clearly concerned with life chances of people. That's missionary business.*

*- Frank Beinder, 1983, p.22*

The ethos of the colleges has shifted over the decades, starting first with a concern for social access, community development and educational innovation. As circumstances have changed, their focus has shifted, as is evident today in their attention to scholarship and baccalaureate education.

- Consistently high educational quality

While not described in this paper, the evidence from transfer and outcomes studies is that the public system has done a good job of ensuring that all its institutions provide good quality education. Variation certainly exists at the program and instructor level, and the adequacy of current program evaluation mechanisms is open to debate, but at the institutional level it is hard to find an institution that has done less than a commendable job in serving its student body.

- Degree-level education as the driver

The influential Macdonald Report was precipitated by an anticipated surge in undergraduate university applications. The creation of four additional

universities, although only three have endured, since the nineties and the authorization of degrees in colleges and institutes have all expanded academic educational opportunities for British Columbians.

In contrast, apprenticeship and certificate-level programming have not kept pace with growth in diploma and degree-level programming. The melding of vocational schools with colleges in the seventies was generally viewed by vocational faculty as detrimental to their programs.

At the degree level, a case can be made that professional faculties incorporating both academic and applied studies have grown relative to the core Arts and Sciences. The point, however, is that this growth has occurred at the bachelor's level, not the pre-baccalaureate level – what is sometimes referred to as “academic creep” in the non-university sector.

- Growing complexity and blurring of boundaries

The BC postsecondary system was relatively simple until the 1960s. Even after the establishment of colleges and institutes, the role of each institutional type was fairly clear.

Over the past two decades, the number of institutional types has increased and the differences between them has become less clear, e.g. examples of nursing and of carpentry programs can now be found in each of the college, university and institute sectors. A further blurring is government's priority since 2000 in strengthening the private postsecondary sector and facilitating student mobility between it and the public sector.

Since about 1990, educators have found it increasingly difficult to anticipate the structure of the postsecondary system ten or twenty years hence. Planning has become fragmented and entrepreneurial, and government has largely withdrawn from attempts at systematic overall coordination, whether directly through its own bureaucracy or indirectly through councils. Regardless of whether one views the trend as desirable or undesirable, the trend has been towards pragmatic and short-term decision-making in the face of an opaque and complicated long-term future.

*We started with the college system emerging from local need and aspirations and very little influence from government. We then moved to greater government control and concomitant loss of local control.*

*The system was fairly predictable in its development with universities and non-universities until 1989 when new institutions were formed, the university colleges. This major change and other changes in legislation since then have led to a confusion of institutional mandates as almost all institutions are degree-granting now. Degrees seem to be the only currency that matters in terms of prestige of the institution.*

*All the differentiation of the last few decades has occurred in the absence of any sort of plan by government. Politics has often played a significant role in system differentiation and institutional creation. And now we have Campus 2020 trying to bring some sense to our disparate, quasi-system.*

*- 2007 email from a member of the BC institutional research community*

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# *Appendix*

## **A History of Individual Public, Postsecondary Institutions in British Columbia**

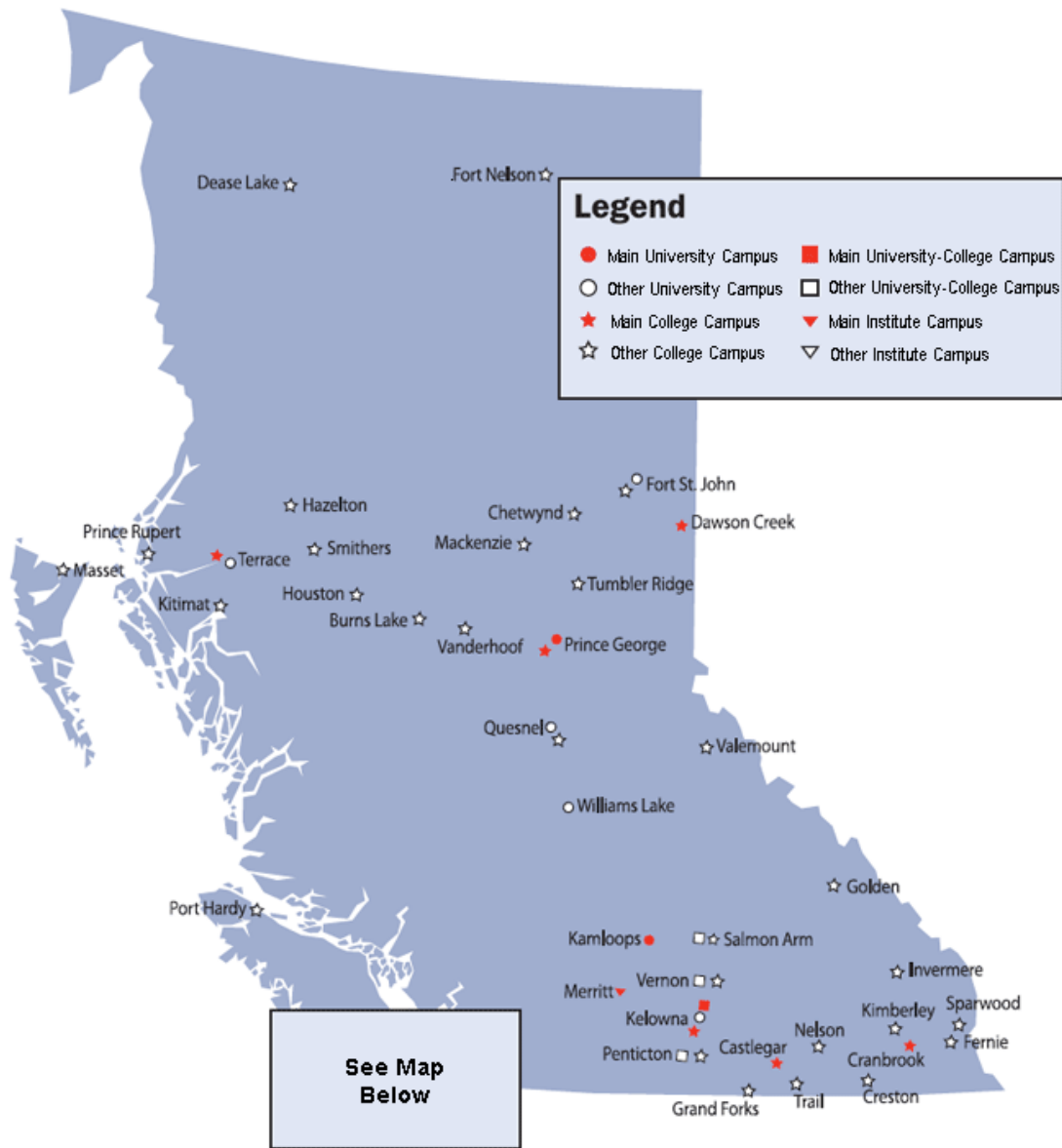
*Much of the factual information in this appendix was gathered by institutional researchers from around the province, sometimes drawing extensively on institutional websites and local histories. The emphases, interpretations and commentary, however, are the author's.*

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Source: BC Ministry of Advanced Education website



## British Columbia Institute of Technology

Headquarters: Burnaby

BCIT's guiding philosophy has been (1) to prepare job-ready graduates for technical and commercial occupations and (2) to provide skills upgrading to advance people's careers. Its history can be divided into three phases:

1960 – 1975	Formation
1976 – 1995	Consolidation and merger
1996 – 2007	Evolution as a polytechnic

The story starts in a minor way in 1919 with a school of navigation that eventually became the Pacific Marine Training Institute in 1978. BCIT's larger predecessor organization was the Burnaby campus of the BC Vocational School. The vocational school had opened in temporary facilities at the Pacific National Exhibition grounds in Vancouver in 1958, moving to the Burnaby location in 1960.

Thanks to a significant influx of federal capital funds for technical and vocational education, BCIT opened in 1964 with 500 students in a Burnaby campus adjacent to the vocational school. The dress code, which persisted into the early 1970s, called for males to wear a shirt and tie and for females to wear "appropriate attire."

1974 was a key date in that BCIT became an autonomous institution that year, separate from the Ministry of Education, with its own Board of Governors. The institute signed its first two collective agreements that year.

Classes in downtown Vancouver, using a variety of rented facilities, began in Fall 1978. By 1980, a location on Howe street had been leased in partnership with Capilano College and SFU (who withdrew in 1983 and 1989 respectively.) This location lasted until 1997 when BCIT opened its own eight-storey building on Seymour Street, this time in the role of landlord who leased some of its space to a variety of public and private educational organizations. The facility was the first "smart" building in Western Canada.

Meanwhile, the BC Vocational School had acquired a hanger in the older, original terminal area of the Vancouver airport for a Sea Island Campus. The vocational school was renamed the Pacific Vocational Institute (PVI) in 1978 when it acquired the shop facilities of the former Haney Correctional Institute (minimum security prison) in Maple Ridge. No longer was the vocational school administered directly by the provincial government.

In 1986, the government merged PVI with its next door neighbour, BCIT. Three years later, in 1989, BCIT's mandate was broadened to include applied research. In 1994, the Pacific Marine Training Institute, operating from fairly new facilities in North Vancouver, was absorbed by BCIT.

Legislation in 1995 gave BCIT the authority to grant degrees in the form of a Bachelor of Technology. Its status as a polytechnic institution was enshrined in legislation in 2004 and its Research Services Office opened in 2005 to support applied research.

BCIT became a partner in the Great Northern Way Campus (described elsewhere in this appendix) in 2002. It opened a replacement Aerospace Technology Campus on Sea Island in 2007.

## **Camosun College**

Headquarters: Victoria

Camosun College's Lansdowne Campus originally housed a Normal (teacher training) school. In World War II, the facility was converted to a military hospital, following which it was shared by the Normal School and the University of Victoria's predecessor, Victoria College. When the site was vacated following the creation of the nearby University of Victoria, the Greater Victoria School Board established the Institute of Adult Studies in 1967, Canada's first centre with daytime courses for students wishing to upgrade to achieve high school graduation.

Interest in a community college grew and in October, 1970, Victoria residents voted to establish a "Juan de Fuca" College. A few weeks later, the provincial government approved the new college.

The college changed its name – Juan de Fuca being susceptible to word games – in 1971 to an early name for Victoria, Camosun (a First Nations word meaning a place where different waters meet and are transformed.) The government merged the Interurban Campus of the BC Vocational School with Camosun College that same year to form a comprehensive community college with two campuses. (The Interurban Campus continues to serve students in trades, technology, business and access programs.)

A small campus on Carey Road became part of Camosun from 1977 to 1995. The downtown Junction storefront also closed in 1995 when some new facilities opened on the Interurban Campus.

In contrast to the makeshift facilities and regional rivalries that plagued the creation of some other BC colleges, Camosun's development was relatively orderly. With its proximity to government offices, Camosun sometimes served as a hub for college consortia, e.g. in information technology, and as an administrator of small, special purpose grants for projects in the college system.

## **Capilano College**

Headquarters: North Vancouver

The North and West Vancouver school boards jointly began exploring the possibilities for some form of continuing studies for the North Shore in 1964. (Howe Sound and Sechelt joined the consortium the following year.) The consultants hired to conduct a feasibility study for a regional college concluded that the high levels of parental



education and income on the North Shore meant there was high potential for postsecondary enrolment.

The government denied permission in 1967 for the school districts to hold a college plebiscite until some sort of a plan for the entire Lower Mainland had been developed to avoid the “needless duplication” of programs (a concern that recurs in BC postsecondary history, but which rarely results in examples being found.) A Lower Mainland College Co-ordinating Committee was thus established in 1967 and a plan produced.

The plebiscite was finally held in 1968, passing in three of the school districts. The defeat in Sechelt was attributed to the high proportion of retired people living there.

SFU, UBC and BCIT all promised to supply the new college with short term staff. Capilano College opened in September 1968 with 775 students. Its temporary location in West Vancouver Senior Secondary School, along with a number of portable units on the site, resulted in many of the predictable stresses. It was not until 1972 that the college was able to acquire a site in North Vancouver. It moved to the 34 acre “Lynnmour” campus in 1973, the same year as it established a regional centre in Squamish. A campus in Sechelt opened in 1977, and a new campus opened in Squamish in 1995.

The college opened mainly with academic enrolments. Career enrolment gradually increased, but by Fall 1972, there were still only 475 career students compared to 943 in academic programs. Today, the majority of students are in applied and professional programs.

## **College of New Caledonia**

Headquarters: Prince George

Prince George’s vocational school opened in 1964. Three years later, in 1967, the regional plebiscite to establish a college passed and the council of the new College of New Caledonia formulated some guiding principles. It decided, among other things, that people should be able to attend college even if they had not graduated from secondary school and that the college would pay a monthly stipend of \$30 a month (at a time when the minimum wage was less than \$1.50 per hour) to students traveling from outside Prince George. The housing subsidy endured until 1990, by which time it had risen to \$75 a month.

The college opened with 250 students in Fall 1969, using facilities in the Prince George Secondary School. In 1971, CNC was the first college in BC to meld with a vocational school, at which time it relocated to the site of the former vocational school with a combined enrolment of 850 students. One of the issues the college faced in its early years was persuading universities to be more flexible in awarding transfer credit.

Another issue in the late seventies, exacerbated in the financial restraint period of the early eighties, was the balance between academic and applied programming. The latter had grown the most rapidly, with the university transfer program accounting for 30% of

enrolment in 1978 compared to 66% in 1971. By 1985, a period of high unemployment in Prince George, the Canada Employment Centre was assisting about 1200 CNC students in fifteen vocational programs. 1985 was a year in which the emphasis clearly shifted from university transfer courses to trades and vocational programs in light of Ministry priorities and government restraint.

Within a few years, the campaign to create the University of Northern British Columbia was in full swing. City University, an American private institution, began offering weekend courses at CNC in business towards bachelor's and master's degrees in 1987. CNC offered its first Internet course in 1997.

The first regional campus opened in Vanderhoof in 1975, followed by Burns Lake in 1976 and Mackenzie in 1977. Smithers and points west left CNC in 1975 to join the newly created Northwest Community College. The first summer semester was offered in 1983, but was cancelled the following year due to low enrolment.

When CNC was being launched, the possibility of a classical Roman Catholic college in Prince George was also under consideration. The bishop decided, however, to focus on secondary education and not to compete in postsecondary education. Two decades later, the University of Northern BC did open and CNC's enrolment suffered. In subsequent years, an enrolment equilibrium developed between the two institutions and a protocol was reached in 1992 between the university and the northern colleges as to what courses each would teach. By 1997, UNBC was sharing space in CNC's Quesnel campus.

As has happened elsewhere in the north, the past decade has seen a concerted effort by the college to serve aboriginal students. Learning centres or offices have also been located over the years at Fort St. James (now a campus), Fraser Lake, Granisle, Grassy Plains and Valemount.

In 1991, CNC established an Academic Council, with the largest constituency group consisting of faculty. Student and employee representatives joined the College Board in 1993. The Academic Council was replaced in 1994 by a newly legislated Education Council.

After various attempts in prior years, a student residence was finally constructed in 1993. It was over budget due to some unexpected costs such as the discovery of a Second World War concrete bunker on the site.

## **College of the Rockies**

Headquarters: Cranbrook

Prompted by a need for more apprenticeship training, community members in the Kimberly – Cranbrook areas started the process in 1971 of establishing a local vocational school. This led to the creation of East Kootenay Community College in 1975 with an edict from government that the main campus be located in Cranbrook.

When the college opened in Fall 1975 with 350 students in Cranbrook, it operated out of seventeen locations. Regional centres, then each serving 40 – 60 students, opened the same year in Kimberley, Fernie, Golden and Invermere.

Sod turning for the permanent Cranbrook campus occurred in 1978, but the campus did not officially open until 1982. New facilities were completed in Invermere in 1988, Fernie in 1989, Golden in 1992, and Creston in 1995. Today the college operates five regional centres, providing Adult Basic Education courses and a few having their own signature programs.

In 1995, the first residence was completed and the institution changed its name to become the College of the Rockies.

## **Douglas College**

Headquarters: New Westminster

The opening of Douglas College in 1970 with 1,200 charter students was a reluctant marriage of four school districts north of the Fraser River with four on the south side. Each cluster of districts had been independently planning a college for five or six years, but the provincial government was adamant that only one college would be built east of Vancouver in the Lower Mainland.

The pre-fabricated portables in New Westminster, Surrey and Richmond had been delayed due to a construction strike. The college opened with classes scattered in about twenty locations: in halls, church basements and schools. The wildly decentralized and scattered institution, with leased facilities in such locations as the Riverview psychiatric hospital and a junior secondary school in Coquitlam, was a challenge to administer. In 1981, the region south of the Fraser River separated to form Kwantlen College. Douglas College remained in New Westminster and all but one of the outlying centres north of the Fraser River were phased out.

All the workshops for vocational programs and the studios for visual arts remained in the Kwantlen region, leaving Douglas College with a program mix heavily weighted towards Arts, Science, Business and developmental programming. Its fine arts programming consisted of performing arts. Areas of strength emerged in the Health and Human Services, further expanding when Psychiatric Nursing was shifted by the government from BCIT to Douglas in 1985. Thus Douglas College came to offer very few programs where students get their hands dirty.

In 1982, Douglas College received its first permanent building, relocating from portables in what is now the site of the Justice Institute to downtown New Westminster, overlooking the Fraser River. The downtown site was viewed by government as a contribution, along with a new courthouse, towards revitalizing the downtown core.

In contrast to New Westminster's urban setting, the permanent Coquitlam campus opened in 1996 in a park setting. Agreements with an adjacent new secondary school and the

City of Coquitlam enabled the three partner organizations to construct a shared sports facility and community centre on the site.

A partnership with the Maple Ridge school district saw Douglas College located for 11 years, until 2003, in a wing of an innovative new secondary school, Thomas Haney.

Continuing Education activities have waxed and waned at Douglas College, but have always been significant. A separate contract training branch opened in 1993 and quickly established itself as an active presence in the provincial scene.

After the authorization of all BC colleges to offer applied baccalaureate degrees, Douglas College began enrolling degree-bound students in 2005 in its own upper level programs in general nursing, followed by psychiatric nursing, therapeutic recreation, business and sport science.

## **Emily Carr Institute of Art + Design**

Headquarters: Vancouver

The Emily Carr Institute of Art + Design is a fine arts institution that offers programs in visual arts, media arts and design. The Vancouver School Board founded the institution in 1925 as the Vancouver School of Decorative and Applied Arts. For many years, it was located at what is now the City Centre campus of Vancouver Community College. During its evolution, it has been named:

- Vancouver School of Arts: Decorative and Applied (1933)
- Vancouver School of Art (1937)
- Emily Carr College of Art (1978)
- Emily Carr College of Art and Design (1981)
- Emily Carr Institute of Art + Design (1995)

Designated a provincial institute in 1978, the institute received degree-granting authority in 1989 through the Open Learning Agency. It was granted authority to offer degrees in its own name in 1994 and in 2006 enrolled its first masters' students.

ECIAD is now located on Granville Island, a forty-acre island created in 1917 that housed heavy industry for fifty years. In the 1970s when the federal government developed a plan for urban renewal that involved government and private enterprises recycling industrial buildings, Emily Carr was among the first occupants of the reborn island.

## **Great Northern Way Campus**

Headquarters: Vancouver

Although it is not an institution in its own right, but rather a consortium, the Great Northern Way Campus is developing in a manner which is only partially controlled by any existing postsecondary institution.

In 2000, Finning International Inc. donated some facilities on the equivalent of six city blocks just outside Vancouver's central business district to four academic institutions: UBC, SFU, Emily Carr Institute of Art + Design and BCIT. The presidents of these founding institutions produced a vision to bring together the high-technology industry, community and government on the site. Their aspiration was to enroll 4,000 students by 2020.

It turned out, however, that it is easier to agree on broad principles, such as being innovative and fostering the economic and land use goals of the City of Vancouver, than to work out operational details. Furthermore, the high tech industry was shrinking rapidly at this time during the "dot com bust." The institutions were hard pressed to maintain enrolments in information technology programs on their own campuses, let alone expand programs on a new campus. The result was that although some pilot courses were offered, e.g. in urban sustainability in 2005, it really was not until 2007 that the first students enrolled in an ongoing program, namely a masters program in digital media. In the meantime, BCIT took advantage of the facilities to temporarily offer some trades programs there.

The campus has a board of directors with senior representatives from each of the partner institutions and up to three external members. It took until January 2007 for the founding partners to agree to a Memorandum of Understanding concerning the academic governance and administration of degree programs. The memorandum established, among other things, that joint degrees offered at GNWC will bear the seals of all four academic partners.

## **Institute of Indigenous Government**

Headquarters: Burnaby (closed)

The Institute of Indigenous Government was created through an agreement between the Union of BC Indian Chiefs and the province of BC in 1995, with three years of shared funding by the province and the government of Canada. The province agreed to provide basic funding for two additional years and designated the IIG as a provincial institute under BC's College and Institute Act. It authorized the IIG to offer a range of credentials, from one-year certificates to bachelor's degrees.

The institute was intended to serve aboriginal students, with curriculum and services geared to their particular interests and needs to exercise their right of self-determination.

The vision was to offer university level courses in such fields as Criminology, Political Science, First Nations Studies, Science and Social Work. IIG was originally located in the Gastown neighbourhood of downtown/east side Vancouver. (It officially moved into a renovated wing of the Open Learning Agency building in Burnaby in March 2006.)

The institution opened after only nine weeks of planning. A 1998 evaluation commissioned by the funding governments concluded that the IIG had experienced financial difficulties in its second and third years of operation, partly due to inadequate planning and financial monitoring and partly because of insufficient funding.

That same evaluation found that “the IIG has encountered two significant barriers that have hampered its implementation: lack of time for adequate planning and insufficient financial resources to fully carry out its plan. As a result, the IIG has not achieved its enrolment targets, has had difficulty providing all the additional student supports (described above, such as elders) needed to deliver its mandate and it has not been able to deliver the extension program in the manner and to the extent originally planned.”

IIG’s enrolment remained small in the ensuing decade and it never achieved its student enrolment target of 129 (restated to 143) fulltime equivalent students. Enrolment problems and management issues further complicated the situation.

In 2007, the provincial government announced the establishment of a Burnaby campus of the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology, another public postsecondary institution with a mandate to serve aboriginal students. As a result, the IIG’s students, staff and assets were transferred to NVIT and the IIG’s operations were wound up.

## **Justice Institute**

Headquarters: New Westminster

When it was jointly established in 1978 by the Attorney General and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology with the goal of maximizing resources and promoting professionalization, the Justice Institute was unique in North America in having a single institution train people who work in the justice system and in public safety. By 1980, a number of visitors from North America and overseas were coming to learn about this collaborative effort.

The institute began by offering training and staff development for corrections, fire services and police. Within a year, emergency health services were added. The offerings were geared to employees of public sector agencies, plus some community program workshops and courses that were open to the public. Much of the instruction was delivered on a contract basis for four provincial ministries, plus the police commission and emergency health services. The early years involved some confusion about the institute’s role in fire service training.

With the mainstreaming of blind students into the public school system, the JI began operations in several buildings of the Provincial School for the Blind and the Deaf at

Jericho Hill in the western part of Vancouver. The institute shared some facilities, such as a recreational complex and a cafeteria, with the school for the deaf.

The government restraint program of the early 1980s resulted in staffing cuts of 30 percent over a two-year period. In December 1983, the Ministry of Education said it would no longer fund the infrastructure of the institute.

During the late 1980s, the JI remained part of the public postsecondary system but reported to, and received its core budget from, the Ministry of the Solicitor General. (Three other ministries also provided funding in 1988/89, supplemented by revenue from training contracts and fee-for-service programs.) Then in 1989/90, the institute was transferred back to the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology. The Advanced Education ministry provided an infrastructure grant that comprised about 10% of the institute's operating revenue.

In 1995, the institute moved from Jericho Hill to a new permanent campus in New Westminster that had originally been a campus of Douglas College when the college operated out of portables. Outreach centres were scattered throughout the province.

The JI's programming broadened during the 1990s to include such offerings as TaxiHost training and the Centre for Conflict Resolution. With financial cuts in 2002/03 in the order of 25%, the institute introduced tuition fees for the first time for the police recruit training program.

Operating with the same degree-granting legislation in recent years as other BC institutes, the JI has begun offering bachelor degrees, is looking into offering master's degrees in partnership with other academic institutions, and is developing capacity to facilitate applied, interdisciplinary research.

## **Kwantlen University College**

Headquarters: Surrey

Kwantlen's story begins in the late sixties when the provincial government dragooned four school districts south of the Fraser River into joining four districts to the north of the river to establish Douglas College. This shotgun marriage lasted from 1970 to 1981 when Kwantlen College split from Douglas College. The first president of Kwantlen endeavoured to focus the college as a polytechnic institution along the lines of Ryerson in Ontario.

Kwantlen operated for two decades from temporary facilities: a sprawling, one-storey portable complex in Surrey, a more compact two-storey campus in Richmond, and warehouse space for vocational programs in a business park in the Newton neighbourhood of Surrey. Other smaller spaces came and went over the years.

Kwantlen's permanent facilities arrived in quick succession, beginning with the first phase of the Surrey campus in 1990. The Richmond campus, home to the college's

design programs, opened in 1992. The smaller Langley campus represented a return to that community in 1993.

The vocational programs were the last to receive permanent facilities, moving in 2007 to a new Trades and Technology Centre to the southeast in Cloverdale. This provincially-owned land, sometimes described as the cow pasture, had at one time been thought by government to be a suitable site for the Technical University of BC.

Kwantlen was awarded university college status in 1995. Because its first degree was in applied design, some people assumed Kwantlen had a different mandate that restricted its bachelor's degrees to applied fields, but it has never been so in legislation. The view held by government officials was that, unlike other university colleges that were given general arts and science degrees because of their distance from universities, Kwantlen was so close to both SFU and UBC that it was not necessary to focus more resources on those degrees.

The institution moved slowly into degree offerings and, unlike the original three university colleges, never offered degrees in collaboration with UBC, SFU, or UVic. The slow pace changed following legislation in 2002 that allowed all university colleges to offer applied master's degrees. Independently of the revised legislation, Kwantlen began developing a full slate of undergraduate arts degrees, new and reconfigured general business degrees, and additional non-applied degrees in nursing and design in response to strong regional demand for the programs. Also beginning in 2002, Kwantlen joined with other university colleges in advocating for re-designation as a university.

## **Langara College**

Headquarters: Vancouver

The efforts of the Vancouver School Board over a period of decades to serve adult learners resulted in the School Board establishing UBC's predecessor a century ago, what is now the Emily Carr Institute of Art + Design in 1925, and finally Vancouver Community College in 1965. Langara then emerged from VCC, making the School Board a parent or grandparent of four substantial postsecondary institutions.

After VCC was created in 1965 by bringing together several predecessor organizations, offerings at the original King Edward Campus (adjacent to the Vancouver General Hospital) were the foundation for the programs that moved to the new Langara campus of VCC in 1970. Similar to the current Douglas and Capilano Colleges, the program mix at the Langara campus was weighted towards academic/university transfer programs and has come to serve a multicultural urban and suburban student body.

VCC had two different bargaining units for faculty: the Langara Faculty Association for "postsecondary" instructors and the Vocational Instructors Association for trades and developmental programs. With their own bargaining unit and a self contained mix of programs on their own campus, the Langara Faculty Association and some administrators advocated for the Langara campus to become a separate college. The split came in April 1994.



Langara College is distinctive in the BC college system in that it has no satellite campuses. In 1997, the same year as it established a Continuing Studies division, it opened a new classroom and office building. The next major expansion occurred a decade later in 2007 with the opening of a library/classroom building.

## **Malaspina University-College**

Headquarters: Nanaimo

The Nanaimo school district formed a community college coordinating committee in 1962 with the hope of establishing a college either through the existing vocational school in Nanaimo or in liaison with UBC. It changed its terminology to “regional college” the following year and, in 1964, the Central Vancouver Island Higher Education Coordinating Committee was formed by nine school districts.

In 1969, the new Malaspina College signed a four to five year lease with the old Nanaimo hospital. Classes began in September with 650 students. A period of high energy and challenges, faculty worked long and enthusiastic hours. Enrolment grew to almost 2,000 students by 1974 and student housing shortages emerged.

After two years of obstacles and struggles, the provincial government purchased surplus military land adjacent to the vocational school in 1973 so that the land could be leased back to Malaspina College at a reasonable price. The permanent campus opened there in Fall 1976, five years after the college had melded with the vocational school. (The vocational school, the first in BC, had started in 1936 as the Dominion – Provincial Youth Training School.)

In 1974, the faculty voted for certification under the Labour Relations Act, partly to protect against intrusion by other provincial unions.

Extension night school courses had been offered since the college’s inception in Duncan and Parksville. The Duncan courses were offered initially through the Cowichan school district’s night school program. A new college campus was constructed there on land leased from the Cowichan Tribes in 1987 – 1989. Malaspina has recently considered options to replace and expand the Cowichan campus through partnerships with other community agencies.

A new Parksville facility opened in 1990. More recently, the University-College partnered with the city, the school district, and the regional library to share a common facility.

Powell River is located on the mainland, but it is only one ferry ride from Courtenay (where North Island College is located), compared to two rides from the Lower Mainland. Malaspina has rented and leased a variety of spaces in Powell River since 1974, finally purchasing and renovating a facility in 2004 to provide a permanent base.

With designation as a university college in 1989 as a result of the provincial *Access for All* initiative, Malaspina began developing degree programs in partnership with the University of Victoria. While it has awarded undergraduate degrees in its own name since 1998 (based on provincial authorization in 1995), it did not immediately take advantage of the 2002 legislation enabling university colleges to offer applied master's degrees. Instead, it has offered graduate degrees in partnership with universities.

Similar to other university colleges, Malaspina's Board has advocated since 2002 for designation as a university.

## **Nicola Valley Institute of Technology**

Headquarters: Merritt

NVIT is an aboriginal-governed institution formed in 1983 as a private institute by the five bands of the Nicola Valley. Three instructors taught 13 students in an environment that promoted traditional ways and fostered student success. Gradually increasing its offerings, NVIT was designated as a provincial institute in 1995 with a three year influx of federal funding and became a member of BC's public postsecondary system.

A permanent campus opened in Merritt in 2002, followed by a student residence in 2007. The Community Education department delivers instruction to communities around the province.

In 2007, the government transferred the assets of the Institute of Indigenous Government to NVIT, including responsibility for continuing operations of the former IIG in Burnaby.

NVIT's commitment to Aboriginal cultures and traditions is reflected in the presence of elders on campus to guide and support staff and students. The majority of the staff is Aboriginal. Despite the institution's name, a comprehensive range of programs is offered, including academic, business, social service and college readiness programs.

## **North Island College**

Headquarters: Courtenay

North Island College started in 1975 as a distinctive institution but became more mainstream in the 1990s.

With a small and dispersed population to serve in coastal towns and villages, North Island initially opted for a distance education model with outreach operations that took the college to the people, rather than brought people to the college. The repertoire of delivery methods in an era before cable, satellite television and the internet included mobile units, learning centres and a short lived experiment in 1981 with a 160 foot ex-whale catcher ship.

Many of the courses were upgrading in nature and were self-paced, leaving Ministry of Education officials uncertain of the extent to which the reported headcount enrolment double-counted students who progressed slowly in the same course across multiple terms. (FTE reporting was not adopted in the BC college system until the early eighties.)

In contrast to the highly unionized environment of other colleges, North Island employees did not bargain collectively but were compensated according to what was called the fair comparison model.

The college's delivery model changed with a new president in 1990 who started the process of building campuses to serve the communities. The Comox Valley Campus opened in 1992, thereby amalgamating seven sites scattered throughout the valley. Distance education continued in partnership with the Knowledge Network, but gradually campuses were opened in Port Alberni (1995), jointly with a high school in Campbell River (1997), and finally in Port Hardy (2003).

The number of access centres has at times reached a dozen. Today, they are located at Ucluelet and Gold River on Vancouver Island, on Cortes Island and at Bella Coola on the mainland.

## **Northern Lights College**

Headquarters: Dawson Creek

In 1964, the provincial government purchased the former Royal Canadian Air Force base in Dawson Creek as the site for a vocational school. Some facilities were renovated and some new ones constructed. Classes started in 1966 in two streams of programming: pre-apprenticeship and pre-employment.

Local school districts had made arrangements with Grande Prairie Regional College in Alberta for some university transfer courses to be offered in the Peace River region of BC. In 1973, the BC and Alberta governments commissioned a study on the feasibility of an interprovincial system of federated colleges to serve the Peace River region. However, the BC government decided to establish its own community college to serve the northeast, striking a regional advisory committee late in 1974.

Two issues threatened the establishment of the college. The first, the need to pass a local funding plebiscite, was removed by legislation early in 1975. The second was the regional rivalry between Dawson Creek and Fort St. John, with Fort St. John initially deciding not to participate in Northern Lights College.

The College opened in 1975 using facilities of the former vocational school/military base that were not always entirely appropriate. Efforts to establish centres in Chetwynd, Fort Nelson and Fort St. John all began by exploring proposals for a shared-use facility with other public agencies and, when those proved unworkable, by constructing exclusive facilities in each community on a leased or owned basis.

Serving an area on the scale of France but with a population of less than 100,000, Northern Lights' outreach activities have included the Stikine (northwest villages such as Atlin, Cassiar and Dease Lake), Fort Nelson, Tumbler Ridge and Hudson's Hope. Operations have been complicated by a boom and bust economy with considerable regional variations across agricultural, mineral and forestry based economies. As with other rural colleges, Northern Lights brought a "can-do" attitude to its activities and has worked proudly to invigorate the community life of the settlements it serves. Calculations of costs per FTE student fail to reflect the benefits the college brings to the social and economic fabric of the north.

## **Northwest Community College**

Headquarters: Terrace

Terrace benefited from the influx of federal funding for postsecondary facilities in the early 1960s through the establishment of a vocational school. Following the 1973 report of the BC Ministry of Education's *Task Force on the Community College* that recommended a community college for every region of the province, the provincial government created Northwest Community College in 1975 (along with North Island College, Northern Lights College, and what is now the College of the Rockies.)

At its founding, Northwest was arguably the most left wing of BC's colleges. This influenced subsequent union-management relations, and is evident today in its outward orientation to serving its communities and in the name of its faculty group: the Academic Workers' Union. It is one of the few remaining BC colleges that has kept "community" in its name, reflecting a deeply held value that its programs and services are there for the benefit of the communities served, and that all citizens should be able to access educational opportunities where they live and work.

A First Nations Council was formed in 1996 to help shape the college's cultural and educational relevance to First Nations communities and learners. The college's Nass Valley centre operates in partnership with the Nisga'a House of Learning. The two centres on Haida Gwaii are at Massett and Queen Charlotte City.

Examples of campus partnerships include the centre at Stewart, operated with Human Resources and Social Development Canada. The School of Exploration and Mining at the Smithers campus is a partnership that responds to the training needs of industry.

The centres in Hazelton and Kitimat have operated since the mid 1970s. The Houston campus moved to new leased space in 1995 and the new Prince Rupert campus (twenty classrooms plus labs) opened in 2005. The thirty acre campus at Terrace continues to serve as the college's main campus.

## Okanagan College

Headquarters: Kelowna

For an institution that functions quite normally and happily on a daily basis, a fair amount of struggle and strife have punctuated Okanagan College's history right from inception. Despite a 1958 survey by the Kelowna mayor's task force on higher education about establishing a junior college, the provincial Premier - also from Kelowna - announced in 1961 that a vocational school would be built instead. Not long after the vocational school opened in 1963 in Kelowna, ten school districts hired a consultant from the University of Washington who recommended a regional college be established in Westbank across the lake from Kelowna.

Penticton withdrew from this college initiative and Vernon was often in disagreement, but a principal was hired in 1966 for the fledgling Okanagan Regional College. Unfortunately, the new principal was unaware that a 60 percent majority was yet needed in a local referendum. Only 55 percent of the region's voters supported the college when the vote was taken and the principal returned home to England. Nevertheless, Okanagan College sputtered into existence in 1968 under another principal by taking over Grade 13 at high schools in Salmon Arm and Kelowna and in some rustic army huts in Vernon.

In 1970, a portable classroom complex in Kelowna caught fire, was extinguished twice, and eventually burned down, all in the same night. Classes resumed at night in the BC Vocational School KLO site, paving the way for the merging of the two institutions in 1971 as a part of the provincial melding of colleges and vocational schools.

Penticton finally joined the College in 1974, leasing space in St. Joseph's elementary school and receiving a campus in 1988. Construction of Vernon's small campus began in 1980 amidst community controversy over an administrator's resignation. Salmon Arm received a new campus in 1991.

The introduction of degree-level studies began in an ordinary manner but eventually led to considerable institutional grief. Degree programs started in 1989 when Okanagan became a university college as a result of the provincial *Access for All* initiative in association with UBC and UVic. Most of the academic programs relocated from the KLO campus to the spacious North Kelowna campus when it opened in 1993. In 1995, the government gave OUC the ability to award degrees in its own name.

As has happened elsewhere in the province, the local community began to advocate for the degree-granting university college to be changed into a university. In 2001, the Minister of Advanced Education fired the College Board for signing a faculty contract that would have created a university-style pay system with rank, tenure and promotion. The new Board implemented the contract anyhow.

The Premier announced in 2004 that North Kelowna would become a campus of UBC - the Okanagan now had its university - while the four remaining campuses would become the reconstituted Okanagan College (and not remain as a university college, as all BC colleges had the power to grant degrees in applied fields by this time.) The government

replaced the Board with a public administrator and the president was relieved of her duties.

With a strong sense of déjà vu, the new Okanagan College opened in September 2005. As it has refocused on college programs, it has re-invented and revitalized itself, and has seen an increase in enrolment, almost back to the OUC enrolment numbers.

## Open Learning Agency

Headquarters: Burnaby (closed)

The provincial government created the Open Learning Institute in 1978 to deliver postsecondary courses and programs via distance education. It operated from a leased warehouse and adjoining office space in Richmond until it moved into its own building in 1992 in Burnaby, just west of BCIT. Some community skills centres operated for a while in the 1990s throughout the province.

OLI's educational philosophy was shaped in large measure by Britain's Open University. Courses were largely print-based but included increasing amounts of other media as technology evolved, eventually offering most courses in an online format; however, print-based course offerings were still preserved in order not to limit access to those without a computer. Initially, students could start courses three times a year (much like a standard semester system), but this evolved to a continuous enrolment model in which students could start their course on any day of the year and could set their own pace of study within a maximum six month course duration. Many students lived in close proximity to other postsecondary institutions but, primarily for reasons of convenience, chose to study through distance education. Most of OLI's students were females in their mid-30's balancing family and careers.

In 1988, the educational cable television authority, the Knowledge Network of the West (KNOW), was brought under the auspices of what was then renamed the Open Learning Agency. KNOW had been established by the government in 1979.

OLA provided a wide range of services:

- **Open College (OC)** – certificate and diploma programs and courses primarily in Business, Health and Human Services, ABE, and Information Technology.
- **BC Open University (BCOU)** – baccalaureate programs and courses primarily in Arts and Science, General Studies, Business, and Health Sciences. A number of partnerships with other postsecondary institutions meant that an Open University degree could include courses developed and delivered elsewhere.
- **Open University Consortium** – brokered delivery of UBC, SFU and UVic distance courses via OLA to increase access to university-level courses without being admitted to the host institution. Transcription of the course was done by OLA, not the host institution.

- **Open School (OS)** – provided courses for students from kindergarten to Grade 12 by technology-enhanced distance delivery. Teachers used broadcast television, computer conferencing, audiographics, and innovative course design in English and French. High-tech companies also participated in an online work experience project.
- **Knowledge Network (KN)** – broadcast of formal, curriculum-based programming for kindergarten to Grade 12 students, teachers, parents and post-secondary students; general education programming for children and adults; and alphanumeric information on labour market and learning opportunities.
- **Access Ability** – an industry and government supported program designed to retrain workers who were injured or disabled on the job as computer programmers for the information technology sector.
- **International Credential Assessment Service (ICES)** – one stop service for students seeking to have course work completed abroad assessed for equivalency to BC courses
- **Credit Review Service (CRS)** – a national service that evaluated workplace-based training programs and courses in order to award academic credit. Individuals could apply these credits towards certificates, diplomas or degree programs offered by BCOU and OC.
- **Credit Bank** – enabled students to “bank” formal course credits received from other accredited educational institutions and credits received from “non-formal” learning such as workplace-based training which could then be applied toward certificates, diplomas, and degrees via OLA’s BCOU and OC.
- **Electronic Library Network (ELN)** – facilitated resource sharing among BC post-secondary libraries through the application of technology.
- **Workplace Training Systems (WTS)** – contract-based delivery of analytical and technological services, and instruction of customized courses and workshops delivered to third parties on a cost-recovery basis.
- **First Nations Education Centres** – maintained delivery agreements with twenty First Nations Education Centre that enabled students to take college and university courses without leaving their communities. Courses were offered in a classroom setting and supported by on-site tutors.
- **Curriculum Publications (CPUB)** – managed the high-volume printing, sales and distribution of K-12 and other curriculum publications until June 2003, formerly managed by the Queen’s Printer in Victoria.

With such a wide range of services and a large number of dual-enrolled students (also taking courses with other institutions), OLA could theoretically graduate more students than it ever enrolled in its own courses.

OLA personnel fell into three categories:

- Course development contractors (e.g. content experts who joined the course development team for a period of time)
- Course tutors – once a course was mounted, students had telephone access to a tutor who marked assignments and answered questions. Students could also interact with their tutor online for courses offered via the internet

- Permanent employees - generally providing infrastructure and student support rather than performing instructional functions

In 2005, the BC government decided to disband OLA, transferring the BCOU/OC component to Thompson Rivers University (TRU), maintaining the Knowledge Network as a separate entity, and transferring ICES and CRS to BCIT, the Electronic Library Network to SFU, the Open School to the New Westminster School District, and Curriculum Publications returned to Queen's Printer. The Access Ability program, funded by the Workers Compensation Board, was wound down but re-emerged at Douglas College as the Opportunities Enabled program. Some BCOU/OC employees relocated to TRU in Kamloops and the remaining employees involved in educational delivery in the Lower Mainland left in June 2007.

## **Pacific Marine Training Institute**

Headquarters: North Vancouver (now merged with BCIT)

The Vancouver School Board first began providing navigation training in 1919 in a building on Dunsmuir Street. This short-lived venture soon lapsed and navigation training was provided privately. It was not until 1938, when the provincial government opened the Vancouver Navigational School, that publicly funded marine instruction was again available. In 1949, this operation was transferred to the Vancouver Vocational Institute (with the addition of a marine engineering component), where it remained until 1975. During that year, new leased premises were acquired, and this new facility, named the Marine Training Centre, began providing training in navigation and engineering. Following the establishment of the Marine Training Advisory Council in 1975, it was decided that the responsibilities of the Centre should be increased. As a result, in 1978, it was designated a Provincial Institute and renamed the Pacific Marine Training Institute.

The Institute's development continued in 1994, when the Pacific Marine Training Institute amalgamated with BCIT under the School of Trades Training to become the Pacific Marine Training Campus.

## **Royal Roads University**

Headquarters: Victoria

Soon after the Department of National Defense closed the federal Royal Roads Military College, new BC legislation established Royal Roads University in 1995. The university leased the former military college's facilities and the elegant 565 acres of Hatley Park National Historic Site near Victoria for a nominal amount but assumed responsibility for the maintenance of the site and for educating the public about the site's historic and natural attributes.



The military college had facilities for about 300 fulltime students. RRU currently serves closer to 2000 full-time equivalent domestic students, relying heavily on collaborative, interactive online programs that are paired with on-campus residencies which typically range from one to three weeks in duration. Undergraduate degree completion programs (years 3 and 4) are also delivered on-campus over twelve continuous months.

RRU is a special purpose university, mandated to offer undergraduate, graduate, and executive programs solely in applied and professional fields. It targets mid career, working adults, enabling them to remain in their jobs and their communities during studies. It also has a mandate to build relationships with the Pacific Rim. Programs of study include business, leadership, environment and sustainability, tourism, information and society, peace and conflict management, communication and culture, and an MBA program in Asia.

RRU's legislation specifies a corporate governance model, in contrast to the typical bicameral university model. Unlike university senates and college education councils, RRU's academic council is advisory only.

Royal Roads operates on a model that resembles continuing education divisions in other institutions. It employs about 50 core faculty plus 300 associate faculty. Tuition fees account for about half the university's revenues. Unlike most other public postsecondary institutions in BC, the provincial operating grant comprises only about one third of the institution's operating revenues.

Tuition fees tend to be above the BC university average, reflecting the ability to pay of mid career adults and their ability to sometimes receive subsidies from their employers. Tuition fees are charged for a full program, rather than on a course-by-course basis, with the two-year (or 12 month on-campus) degree completion programs typically costing around \$13,000 and a master's program costing about \$20,000.

RRU's distinctive niche in BC postsecondary education is reflected in an enrolment profile that is currently much more weighted towards master's degrees and international students than at most Canadian universities: about 800 undergraduate FTEs, 1100 graduate FTEs, and 1000 international FTEs.

## **Selkirk College**

Headquarters: Castlegar

Due to the interests of various groups, such as employees of the Cominco smelter in Trail who placed a high value on education for their children, what was originally termed the West Kootenay Regional College was the first BC community college to be established from scratch with no predecessor institutions.

The regional referendum to create a college passed in 1965 with a comfortable majority of 72 percent. The six participating school districts agreed that Castlegar would be an appropriate site because no district was more than an hour's drive away. The new college

was renamed Selkirk College, after the local mountain range and after having considered other possibilities such as Confluence College and David Thompson College.

Classes started in 1966 in four abandoned bunkhouses that the Celgar pulp mill had provided until the permanent campus was completed the following year. The bunkhouses were less than elegant and the science lab used electric hot plates as Bunsen burners.

Small campuses opened in Grand Forks and Trail, and storefront operations began in Kaslo and Nakusp. Nelson ended up with three sites: the Kootenay School of the Arts operates from a downtown location, the Silver King site operates from the former vocational school, and the Tenth Street site is located in another residential neighbourhood and was once the site of Notre Dame University (closed in 1976) and the subsequent David Thompson University Centre (operated jointly by Selkirk College and the University of Victoria until 1984.)

Created in 1999 with the idea that an historic Doukhobor communal dwelling on College property in Castlegar could be transformed into a site for peace, healing, and reconciliation, the Mir Centre for Peace is currently housed in an early 20th century Doukhobor home. It sits on what once were traditional aboriginal lands inhabited by the Sinixt. A First Nations arbour/meeting hall and a traditional smoke house have also been built. Two interdisciplinary programs in Peace Studies are offered.

## **Simon Fraser University**

Headquarters: Burnaby

Three themes will be used in this sketch of SFU's history: its hasty founding, its expansion beyond Burnaby Mountain into renovated and repurposed facilities, and its evolution from radical roots.

SFU quickly came to be known as BC's "instant university." Following the Macdonald Report of 1962 which recommended the formation of two new four-year institutions, an architectural competition was held to design the campus. The four architects who had been runners-up in the competition each designed at least one building within the overall plan. Construction began in the spring of 1964 and eighteen months later, in September 1965, Simon Fraser University opened with 2,500 students.

Largely a commuter institution, SFU established a storefront operation with BCIT and Capilano College on Howe Street in Vancouver in 1980. In 1989, it was able to relocate and expand its downtown operation significantly in the self-financed Harbour Centre, sometimes called "Yuppie U" in the early years because of its contemporary interior design and outreach to working professionals. In 2000, the university expanded across Hastings Street to open the Wosk Centre for Dialogue. The Segal Graduate School of Business opened in 2006 around the corner on Granville Street in a renovated bank building. Renovations currently underway in the former Woodward's department store, two blocks east of Harbour Centre (also a former department store), are being made in partnership with the City of Vancouver as a component of the revitalization of the inner city. When opened in 2009, the facility will house SFU's Centre for Contemporary Arts.

When the Technical University of BC closed and SFU became the successor organization in 2002, it was able to relocate operations from the Surrey Place Mall into the lower floors of a new, again architecturally significant, office tower. As described elsewhere, SFU is also a partner in the Great Northern Way Campus on the former Finning International lands in Vancouver.

Along with its distinctive facilities, SFU differentiated itself in the beginning by a number of educational practices that were innovative by Canadian university practices of the day. These included a trimester system, accessibility to part-time students, the use of tutorials to supplement large lectures, and openness to interdisciplinary practices. These have become more common at other universities in the interim, and the faculty and student body are no longer the hotbed of politics and student unrest that characterized SFU's early years. Nevertheless, SFU's distinctive features are still evident today in such programs as the cohort programs offered at SFU Surrey.

Despite a focus on sustainability and building community on the commuter-oriented Burnaby Mountain campus, there is a modicum of irony in SFU joining "the establishment" as a land developer. In 1995, the City of Burnaby transferred 330 hectares of Burnaby Mountain to SFU on the agreement that SFU maintain it as a conservation area. In return, the university received approval to build a new residential community surrounding the campus, partly to create an endowment fund.

## **Technical University of British Columbia**

Headquarters: Surrey (closed)

TechBC was a special-purpose university that operated from 1999 until its closure by the BC government in 2002 (at which time its students and programs were transferred to SFU.)

The Fraser Valley University Society was formed in 1991 to lobby for a full-service university in the Fraser Valley, a region with a large and rapidly growing population but a low university participation rate. Public opinion polling and the skills-development policies of the NDP government led the province to announce in February 1995 that a free-standing technical university, to be located on a \$100 million campus in the Cloverdale neighbourhood of southern Surrey, would be created.

The *Technical University of British Columbia Act*, passed in July 1997, did not provide for an academic senate, a standard feature of faculty curriculum control in other universities. This, coupled with news that the new university would operate without tenure, led to a year-long boycott by the Canadian Association of University Teachers.

Although its initial charter suggested TechBC's involvement would be in a range of applied fields, the government decided to pursue specifically high-tech program offerings, in keeping with the economic climate of the times. The institution pursued an "integrated learning" approach, combining heavy use of on-line learning with mixed face-to-face course structures. All students underwent a common, intensive first-year program

called TechOne, which emphasized core artistic, technical, mathematical, and communication skills. Students completing TechOne could continue in any of TechBC's offerings, but the TechOne program was generally not transferable to other institutions -- a problem that would plague the university in its student-recruitment efforts.

The provincially-owned land in Cloverdale was viewed as impractical from urban and transportation perspectives. The City of Surrey offered a 12-acre parcel of land in Whalley in northern Surrey. The university thus located temporarily in a former department store at the adjacent Surrey Place Mall.

The property-development arm of the provincial auto insurer, ICBC, proposed that TechBC lease a portion of a landmark tower it was building close by. With a change of government in 2001, the ICBC development was seen by some as a questionable initiative of the previous government. The new government initiated a review of TechBC almost immediately and announced in February 2002 that the university would be closed.

Transition arrangements proceeded quickly. SFU Surrey opened in September 2002, initially in the same facilities and with much the same programs as its predecessor. Ironically, it relocated to the ICBC tower in September 2005 after presenting the case to government that the site made the most business sense.

## **Thompson Rivers University**

Headquarters: Kamloops

In the late sixties, the Regional College Committee of five school districts proposed that a community college should be developed in concert with the Kamloops Vocational School that was then under construction. With government funding following overwhelming regional support, Cariboo College opened in 1970.

In its first year of operation, Cariboo's classes were offered at the Kamloops Indian Residential School. The college moved to its permanent location in 1971 and opened a small campus in Williams Lake. Vocational programming began that same year, but it was not until 1974 that the college melded with the adjacent vocational school. By 1975, the college enrolled 2000 students, about half of whom studied full-time.

In 1985, the Williams Lake campus moved, and kept on moving in 1997 when the ground shifted and the campus had to be vacated. The campus was abandoned in 2000 due to land slippage, with the 1000-student replacement campus not officially opening until April 2007.

The year 1989 marked a major development for the institution as Cariboo College was made a university college under the provincial government's *Access for All* initiative. It began offering degree completion programs offered in conjunction with the three established provincial universities. In 1995, the same year as the college introduced interactive television for regional programming, legislation gave the University College of the Cariboo a mandate to award autonomous degrees.

In 1993, the university college hosted the Canada Summer Games. Centres in Merritt and Lillooet opened the following year. Regional centres are located today at 100 Mile House, Ashcroft/Cache Creek, Barriere, Clearwater, Lillooet and Williams Lake.

The newly formed Friends of UCC began a campaign in 2003 to change the name from “university college” to “university.” A year later, the government announced that UCC would receive “special university” status and would assume the assets of the BC Open University that had formerly been housed at the Open Learning Agency. A public competition was held to name the new institution, the winner being Thompson Rivers University. TRU was formally inaugurated in April 2005.

## **University College of the Fraser Valley**

Headquarters: Abbotsford

The Chilliwack community became interested in the early 1960's in starting a post-secondary institution in the Fraser Valley to respond to the growing provincial demand for skilled and educated workers. After researching the idea and visiting California community colleges, the Chilliwack Chamber of Commerce educational committee proposed a junior college to the provincial government. The provincial government denied the proposal in 1966 and, as occurred in Kelowna, instead suggested a vocational school that could be located near the geographic centre of the Valley, on Lickman Road in Chilliwack. Planning for the vocational school was interrupted by a change of government in 1972, at which time community groups increased their lobbying efforts especially in light of the discontinuation of Grade 13.

In 1973, the provincial government appointed a task force to study the feasibility of a college for the Fraser Valley. Within the two months allocated for the study, the task force assembled several reports and data to recommend a comprehensive regional college that would provide traditional and non-traditional students with university transfer, career, and vocational programs. Eighty-nine percent of the voters in a local plebiscite supported the college concept and the provincial government reacted to this strong show of support by formally proclaiming Fraser Valley College in April, 1974.

Several months of frantic planning followed to prepare for the opening of the new college in September 1974. In the absence of an official campus, classes were held in church basements, schools, and commercially rented spaces. Administrative offices were housed in store fronts, community centres, and sections of schools and school board offices. FVC served 183 full-time and 2,300 part-time students during its first year of operation.

In response to the strong rivalries between the communities of Abbotsford and Chilliwack for college services, each was afforded a “temporary” campus in 1975. This followed with an additional temporary campus in Mission that same year for continuing education and adult basic education programs. FVC's first permanent campus opened on King Road in Abbotsford in 1983. Two regional centres in Hope and Agassiz completed this multi-campus institution.

The closure of the Chilliwack military base in 1995 led to plans for a multi institution Canada Education Park. UCFV's participation in this initiative has resulted in its completion in late 2007 of a 2.5 acre Trades and Technology Centre, built within the shell of an existing building.

A distinctive feature of the college was that all unionized employees, faculty and staff alike, were represented by a single union.

Much of the institution's recent growth and expansion is related to its transformation from a two-year community college to a university college in 1991. After a round of community and student advocacy rivaling that of 1974, FVC was granted university college status by the provincial government. By 1992, UCFV was offering four-year degree programs in partnership with Simon Fraser University, the University of Victoria, and the Open University.

Under new legislation passed in 1995, UCFV began awarding its bachelor's degree programs under its own name. UCFV currently offers 12 bachelor's degree programs and in 2005 enrolled its first master's degree cohort in Criminal Justice.

## **University of British Columbia**

Headquarters: Vancouver

UBC started slowly, a reflection of the times. It was established in 1908 but did not enroll students until 1915, and did not move to its permanent campus until 1925.

For its first thirty years, UBC was a small, predominantly undergraduate teaching institution. With the influx of veterans following World War II, UBC developed a momentum that has propelled it to a point where its consolidated revenue is now in the order of \$1.5 billion annually. Approximately \$700 million is for general operations. The \$300 million earmarked for sponsored research exceeds the operating budget of every college and institute in BC. Donations to UBC are occasionally in the \$1 – 10 million range, and have reached \$50 million from a single donor. Thus some years, UBC receives more in charitable gifts than a number of other postsecondary institutions receive in annual grants from government.

In 1907, the government passed an act to set aside land that could be sold to fund a university. The history of the endowment lands has several phases, but revenues were largely unrealized until 1988 when UBC created the UBC Properties Trust to manage the remaining 1000 acres. Leasehold developments adjacent to campus, and infilling between existing university facilities, is generating tens of millions of dollars for the benefit of UBC.

Facility and site planning have been ongoing challenges. Upon opening in 1915, UBC operated for a decade in temporary facilities near the Vancouver General Hospital. In 1922, students protested overcrowding at the "Fairview Campus" and organized a parade, the Great Trek, from the Fairview campus to the permanent Point Grey campus.

Simultaneously, a 56,000-name petition was submitted to the government to continue development on the Point Grey campus. UBC officially moved to Point Grey in 1925.

A master site plan for the campus was prepared in 1914 but few buildings other than the main library, the original wing of the chemistry building, and an affiliated theological college complied with the architectural guidelines. To accommodate the meteoric academic expansion after the Second World War, a number of military huts were moved to campus as a temporary measure. They remained for decades as new facilities were constructed to keep up with growth in enrolment and research projects.

Although UBC has been very successful in attracting affiliated organizations, researchers and students (now enrolling over 40,000 students each autumn), it was slower in establishing satellite campuses to take UBC into the community. A modest presence in downtown Vancouver began in November 2001 at Robson Square. UBC Okanagan opened in September 2005 when the provincial government transferred what was then the 12-year old North Kelowna campus of Okanagan University College to UBC, reconstituting the older remaining campuses in the region as Okanagan College.

With a large research infrastructure well in place, UBC has in recent years increased its support of the scholarship of teaching and learning, funding and promoting initiatives that may well improve the sometimes modest ratings by current and former UBC undergraduates of their educational experiences.

## **University of Northern British Columbia**

Headquarters: Prince George

The University of Northern British Columbia was founded as “a university in the north, for the north.” Its story begins in January 1987 at a public meeting, held at the College of New Caledonia, about the possibility of extending degree-awarding opportunities in Prince George. After a dozen or so meetings, the Interior University Society (IUS) was incorporated in December 1987 and swiftly expanded to include directors representing the whole northern region of the province. The member of the legislative assembly for Prince George South, who served as Minister of State for the Cariboo Region of BC, saw the regional development potential of a northern university and provided important political support for the IUS.

The feasibility of sustaining a university serving a population base of less than 200,000 people scattered over hundreds of kilometers was questioned by many educators and citizens living outside the region. The Ministry of Advanced Education for postsecondary education commissioned the "Bullen Study" in 1988, which recommended creation of university colleges rather than the full university for which the IUS was campaigning. In November 1989, however, the region's MLA became Minister of Advanced Education and announced in January that a university would be established. The UNBC Act was passed in June 1990.

Fifteen sites in Prince George were originally considered, but these were shortlisted to six sites. Crown acreage on Cranbrook Hill overlooking the city was finally selected, another

example of building BC universities in geographically interesting sites. 70 students joined the “QuickStart” program in August 1992, although interviews did not begin until November for the appointment of the first 40 continuing faculty members. By this time, it was evident that the full opening of the university would be delayed a year to September 1994. At present, regional campuses operate in Quesnel (new campus opened in 2005 in partnership with the College of New Caledonia), Terrace and Fort St. John.

The case for creating UNBC included reference to the distinct educational needs of the north, both in terms of research and the training of professionals locally in an attempt to staunch migration to southern and urban centres. This philosophy has shaped the university’s research priorities of:

- Natural resources and the environment
- Rural, remote and northern health
- Sustainability of communities

The university has a special mandate to serve the needs of the First Nations and aboriginal peoples of the north. It is a member of the “University of the Arctic,” an international network of universities, colleges and other organizations that cooperate to share resources and expertise to build postsecondary programs that are accessible and relevant to northern students.

## **University of Victoria**

Headquarters: Victoria

The University of Victoria (British Columbia) came into being on Canada Day in 1963, but had 60 years of prior tradition as Victoria College. From 1903 to 1915, Victoria College was affiliated with McGill University and offered first and second year McGill courses in Arts and Sciences. With the opening of UBC, it suspended operations in 1915 but began the second stage of its development in 1920, reborn in affiliation with UBC.

In 1946, Victoria College moved from Craigdarroch Castle to the Lansdowne campus of the Provincial Normal School (which joined the College in 1956 as its Faculty of Education.) Academic expansion was rapid after 1956. In 1961 the College, still in affiliation with UBC, awarded its first bachelor's degrees.

In 1959, the Council of Victoria College bought the 120 acre Gordon Head Army Camp as an ancillary site to the main Lansdowne campus. In 1961, the University Development Board of Victoria College retained consulting architects and planners who convinced the College Council to move the entire campus to the Gordon Head property. By April 1961, another 141 acres of property were purchased from the Hudson's Bay Company and added to the site.

(As an aside, other BC postsecondary institutions that have used former military property include Malaspina University-College, Royal Roads University, Northern Lights College, and the University College of the Fraser Valley.)



The campus master plan developed in the 1960s has endured remarkably well. It called for a circular campus with Liberal Arts disciplines to the north, and Sciences to the south. A ring road was planned to encompass the academic campus, with ancillary services outside the ring, such as student housing, athletics, parking, and the student union building. It recommended that local architects be used and that designs be in the style of the day, making no singular ostentatious statement and fitting within the landscape

Educationally, UVic sought to be a welcoming environment not only for Vancouver Island students but also for students from smaller centres in the interior of the province. This outreach was reflected in initiatives such as the collaborative nursing program that enabled RN graduates from colleges to complete upper level studies for a degree.

UVic's curriculum initially focused on the Arts and Sciences and on programs that tended to serve the public sector, e.g. education, human and social development, and public administration. The expansion of programming that leads more frequently to employment in the private sector began with law, followed by engineering and business.

The expansion into engineering in the 1980s came at a time that UBC was also seeking to expand its applied sciences. Rather than further expand engineering at UBC, a provincial report conducted under the auspices of the Universities Council of BC recommended that a new engineering school be located in Victoria and that SFU offer engineering science rather than professional engineering.

## **Vancouver Community College**

VCC's history is a myriad of threads that converge and diverge over more than a century. Its downtown site on Pender Street dates back to the 1880s as Vancouver's Central School and its first high school.

In the early decades of the 1900s, the property housed the Vancouver School of Art (1925) and the school district administrative offices (1910 – 1952). It was also the object of several unsuccessful attempts by the city to acquire some or all of the land for a civic centre that would have included, among other things, a new city hall. In 1946, ratepayers approved the planning of the civic centre but voted against funding it the following year, allowing the site to be used by the new Vancouver Vocational Institute (VVI) in 1949.

The seeds of VVI were sown in the World War II era when a new type of pre-employment training was sought to speed up three to four year apprenticeships and to address the shortage of apprenticeship positions. Created by the school board, VVI brought together a number of existing training programs from disparate locations. The institute was a success from the beginning, with the squeezing of more students into space than it was designed to accommodate becoming a continuing saga for forty years. Classes occasionally spilled into other locations, including the poultry and livestock buildings of the Pacific National Exhibition.

Another precursor thread began in 1962 when the Vancouver School Board established the King Edward Senior Matriculation and Adult Education Centre adjacent to the Vancouver General Hospital. In 1965, Vancouver City College (renamed Vancouver

Community College in 1974) was created from the King Edward Centre, the school district's Adult Education Division, the Vancouver School of Art (later to become the Emily Carr Institute of Art + Design) and the Vancouver Vocational Institute.

VVI retained its name after becoming part of VCC. It took until 1970 for VVI to become fully integrated with the college, including a shift from accepting the best qualified applicants to accepting all applicants who met minimum thresholds on a first-come, first-served basis. In 1979, the last remnants of the Vancouver School of Art left the Pender Street site and VVI obtained approval for major renovations, including construction of a nine-storey tower to address space shortages. Beginning in the early 1980s, heavy trades were moved to the new China Creek site of the King Edward campus and to BCIT from 1985 to 1988.

In the 1980s, VVI's status as an elite training institution had diminished and the demand for longer training periods had increased. The lessened status of vocational education contributed to the removal of the name Vancouver Vocational Institute in 1989.

Meanwhile, VCC had opened its Langara campus in 1970 in south Vancouver. A fire at the King Edward campus in 1973 resulted in a new building that was intended to be used eventually by the hospital. Some supplemental wooden buildings, i.e. huts, were torn down in 1977. As had occurred at VVI, the space crunch at King Edward was serious despite a number of offsite rental spaces. Furthermore, its lease was scheduled to end in 1979.

A new site for the King Edward campus was found to the east at the China Creek park. The velodrome built in 1954 for the British Empire games was demolished in 1980 to make room for VCC. The new King Edward campus opened in 1983.

In the late 1980s, the government sought to assemble all hospitality and tourism programs in the Lower Mainland at VCC. (Other programs were shifted around the Lower Mainland as part of a rationalization of offerings.) In 1994, Langara split off to become a separate college.