

Douglas assists with job search

DANIEL HENDRIKSEN
For Metro

A grant from the province of British Columbia is allowing Douglas College to launch a new program aimed at training mental health workers to assist those who suffer from mental health issues obtain employment.

The B.C. Ministry of Advanced Education, through its B.C.'s Skills for Jobs Blueprint, has allocated \$75,000 to get the project started. It provides webinar-based education sessions for mental health and employment practitioners within the Vancouver Coastal Health and Fraser Health authorities. The goal of the program is to improve the workers' skills and knowledge in order to better assist patients with serious mental illness and substance use problems find and succeed in jobs.

Douglas is offering the program through the psycho-

social rehabilitation advanced practice, a centre funded by the Ministry of Health that provides leadership, education and guidance to the mental health field.

John Higenbottam is a clinical psychologist and creator of the psychosocial rehabilitation program at Douglas. He says the intended outcome of this project is to lead to improved client quality of life, as well as increased skills for mental health and social service practitioners who help people living with mental health and substance use problems.

"Evidence shows that employment can and does help people recover and has positive system impacts," Higenbottam said. "A recent 10-year study demonstrated a significant reduction in hospital and service system costs for individuals who were in stable job situations. Essentially, helping people get and keep jobs is a proven strategy for recovering a life worth living."



John Higenbottam is a clinical psychologist and creator of the psychosocial rehabilitation program at Douglas College. CONTRIBUTED

BCIT. Student innovators visit the Lower Mainland

Some of Canada's top student innovators visited the Lower Mainland last week, as the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) hosted the ninth annual Polytechnics Canada Student Applied Research Showcase on Nov. 14.

The event is part competition and part science fair, designed to give students a platform to present their cutting-edge projects to their peers and a panel of judges. Some of the innovations presented include: A cellphone app that sends time delayed text and voice messages; another app that keeps all medication info in safe digital storage in smartphones; an educational crime game; and

a vehicle tracking system for transit users.

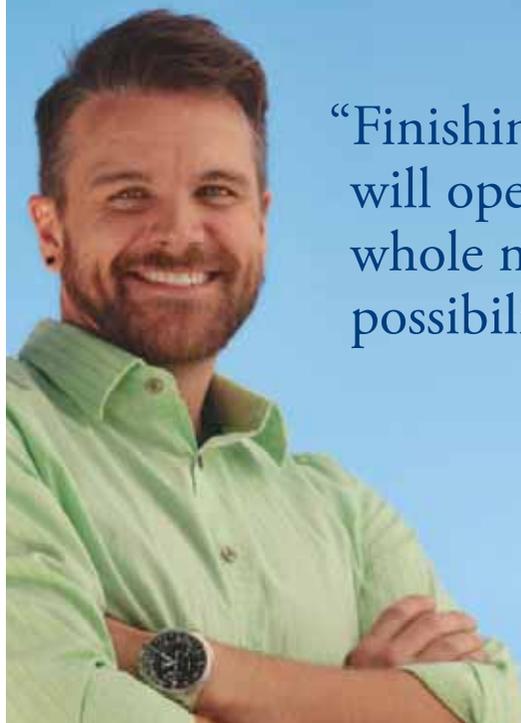
"Our annual Student Applied Research Showcase raises the profile of the impact of polytechnic applied research for our students and our partners" Nobina Robinson, chief executive officer of Polytechnics Canada, said in a press release. "Our annual celebration highlights student creativity and ingenuity in solving industry problems. The showcase demonstrates that federal support for our model of collaborative applied research is building vital innovation skills in our students and graduates; these are the skills employers are clamouring for."

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