
NEWS RELEASE

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Office of the Premier
Ministry of Advanced Education

PROVINCE TO ESTABLISH VANCOUVER ISLAND UNIVERSITY

NANAIMO – Malaspina University-College will become a university, to be called Vancouver Island University (VIU), Premier Gordon Campbell and Advanced Education Minister Murray Coell announced today.

“As the first-ever Vancouver Island university based outside the greater Victoria region, Vancouver Island University will be a critical educational, social and economic hub, giving thousands of students from Vancouver Island a chance to get the education they want closer to home,” said Premier Campbell. “VIU will build on its international reputation for its Aboriginal-focused programs, leading-edge Coastal Resource Management programs, and trades and technology programs.”

Pending amendments to B.C.’s University Act, the new Vancouver Island University will focus on the training needs of the region and build on its provincial, national and international reputation in its key areas of specialization and excellence, which include its First Nations studies, Coastal Resource Management and trades and applied technology.

“It was clear from the Campus 2020 process that British Columbians want access to university degree programs closer to home,” said Coell. “Creating this new university is part of our vision for post-secondary education in B.C., which includes a responsive system that creates more high-quality opportunities for students, and being a leader in research support.”

The institution began as a community college in 1969 and became a vocational school in 1971 to provide career, technical and trades programs. In 1989 Malaspina was designated a university college. It has campuses in Nanaimo, Cowichan, Parksville-Qualicum and Powell River.

“University status will bring enormous benefits to our students and communities, while retaining our local focus and our emphasis, above all, on excellent teaching,” said Malaspina University College president Ralph Nilson. “We plan to continue our leading role in strengthening the economic, social and cultural conditions within our region.”

“This is incredible news for our community,” said Nanaimo-Parksville MLA Ron Cantelon. “This new status will have far-reaching economic benefits for our local economy and industry in our region.”

Malaspina University-College has an enrolment of 19,124 students, including 1,129 international students. Since 2001, the Province has increased operating funding for Malaspina by \$11M and invested \$23.6M in capital projects, which includes acquisition of 40 per cent of the Cowichan Fairgrounds for future development.

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