
NEWS RELEASE

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Office of the Premier
Ministry of Advanced Education

NEW UNIVERSITY TO INCREASE STUDENT SPACES AND PROGRAMS FOR KAMLOOPS AND THOMPSON-CARIBOO

KAMLOOPS – The University College of the Cariboo will assume responsibility for the Open University and Open College to form a new special purpose university that will increase student spaces in the region by 3,000 and expand a variety of applied learning programs, Premier Gordon Campbell announced today.

“For the first time ever, students in Kamloops and the Thompson-Cariboo will be able to get a full university degree without leaving home,” Campbell said. “The new university will bring \$100 million a year in new economic benefits to the Thompson-Cariboo and establish Kamloops as a provincial centre of excellence for open learning, First Nations, sport, tourism and health programs.”

The new special purpose university – which is yet to be named – will offer undergraduate programs in arts, sciences, business and a variety of other disciplines, and will continue pursuing an applied research program in areas that are most relevant to the central Interior. Some key new areas of growth include education degrees to train secondary school teachers; physical education, sports sciences and sports tourism programs; and further expansion of the aboriginal tourism program and newly-developed B.A. degree in aboriginal studies.

At the same time, it will maintain the array of career, technical, vocational, trades and developmental programs for which the University College of the Cariboo and the Open University and Open College are known. It will also continue its commitment to regional programs. To help deliver those programs, government today announced a \$12 million investment to develop a new regional campus for Williams Lake. Regional programs will also continue in 100 Mile House, Ashcroft, Cache Creek and other communities.

“We are committed to the whole region, and our hope is that a strong university presence will improve access for anyone who wants to further their education,” said Advanced Education Minister Shirley Bond.

In addition to developing the \$12 million Williams Lake campus, government will invest \$20 million in capital for the Kamloops campus. It will also transfer Open University and Open College's \$10-million annual budget and add up to \$5.6 million to the University College of the Cariboo's current budget, for a \$15.6-million boost to annual operating funds by 2010. In that timeframe, government will add up to 800 seats to the university-college's current enrolment of 6,000, and Open University and Open College will transfer 2,200 distance learning student spaces. By 2010 the new university will enrol the equivalent of approximately 9,000 full-time students. The annual economic impact is anticipated to be \$100 million.

"This is terrific news for our institution, our students and our community," said Roger Barnsley, president of the University College of the Cariboo. "We have been striving for university status for some time and are excited that government sees the value of what we have to offer students."

"As Kamloops has grown and matured as a community, so has the University College of the Cariboo," said Kamloops-North Thompson MLA Kevin Krueger. "This region needs a balance of university, college, trades and distance education options – and a university with a strong regional mandate to provide them."

"UCC has played a pivotal role in the development of our city and the entire region," said Kamloops MLA Claude Richmond. "The move to university status, combined with the Open University and Open College, means the institution will continue to be a leader in our community."

Planning for the new special purpose university is expected to begin immediately, with a complete transition anticipated for the start of the September 2005 school year. The University College of the Cariboo invites the community to submit ideas for a university name for consideration, to uccinfo@cariboo.bc.ca A shortlist of name suggestions will go to government by August 2004.

For more information on AchieveBC visit <http://www.achievebc.ca/>.

1 backgrounder(s) attached.

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