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For Immediate Release

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COTR recognized for Indigenous education excellence

Acknowledgement of work done to advance Indigenous education is an honour

College of the Rockies' work to improve educational opportunities for Indigenous students was recognized by Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICan) at its 2023 Awards of Excellence. The annual awards presentations recognize best practices and individual achievements from colleges and institutes across the country.

In the Indigenous Education Excellence category, College of the Rockies was presented with the bronze award.

"I am honoured the College is being recognized for all we've done to advance Indigenous initiatives in our journey toward reconciliation," said Dana Wesley, Executive Director, Indigenous Strategy and Reconciliation. "We are proud of the work we have done to build relationships with our Indigenous partners and look forward to building on the momentum we have across the College."

Some of the highlights of initiatives the College has worked on include:

- College of the Rockies' Two Year (2021-2023) Action Plan includes a focus on "Truth and Reconciliation: Shoulder to Shoulder with Indigenous Partners" under the pillar of "Ready for Change".
- Indigenous Education collaborated with the College's Centre for Innovation in Teaching and Learning to create a series called "Dialogues with Indigenous People". This series is interactive and has several stages that include preparing learners (students and employees) to engage with invited Indigenous speakers; post-presentation reflection, and a Reciprocity event.
- In 2022 the College unveiled Indigenous names for the new student housing buildings. The five new buildings are collectively referred to as ʔa-kikʔuʔnam (village) The individual buildings are named: ʔakisq̓nuk (Columbia Lake), Yaq̓it ʔa-knuq̓iʔit (Tobacco Plains), ʔaq̓am (St. Mary's), Yaq̓an Nuʔkiy (Lower Kootenay) and Kyaknuqliʔit/Kenpesq̓'t (Kinbasket Shuswap).
- For over five years, the College has had a Ktunaxa representative on the Board of Governors, and recently that has increased to two. In 2022 one of the Indigenous Governors was elected Vice-Chair.
- In 2019, College of the Rockies signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Ktunaxa Nation Council (KNC). That same year the College partnered with the KNC to develop and implement the Human Service Worker Enhanced Program for Indigenous students.

- The College partnered with the Métis Nation BC on several cohorts of the Human Service Worker Enhanced program and has also partnered with the Rocky Mountain Métis Association to deliver computer skills to Métis Elders for the past two years.
- The Indigenous Education team offers educational events to observe important Indigenous dates such as Indigenous History Month, the National Day of Indigenous Peoples, the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, the Moose Hide Campaign, Red Dress Campaign, Louis Riel Day, and others.

The 2023 Awards of Excellence were announced at World Congress, a global event co-hosted by CIGan and the World Federation of Colleges and Polytechnics. Post-secondary leaders worldwide meet at the annual congress to discuss, share, and expand their collective intelligence.

Learn more about Indigenous Education at College of the Rockies at: cotr.ca/indigenous

About College of the Rockies

For more than 45 years, College of the Rockies has provided post-secondary education that meets the needs and aspirations of the people, industry, and businesses of our region. Each year, we welcome more than 10,000 full-time and part-time students into a full range of programs, including: skilled trades, university studies, adult upgrading, early childhood education, health and human services, business, office administration, tourism, hospitality, recreation, fire services, continuing education, and contract training. Through smaller class sizes, highly personalized instruction and dedicated support services, our students are primed to succeed in the job market, or in the next stage of their academic journey.

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Cutline: College of the Rockies was awarded bronze for Indigenous Education Excellence at the World Congress, a global event co-hosted by Colleges and Institutes Canada and the World Federation of Colleges and Polytechnics. Attending the awards ceremony were: (l-r) Dianne Teslak – VP, Finance & Corporate Services; Paul Vogt - President and CEO; Stephanie Wells – Dean, Business Arts and Science; Jenn Smith – Co-op and Employment Services Coordinator; Robin Hicks – VP, Academic and Applied Research; Dana Wesley – Executive Director Indigenous Strategy and Reconciliation; Darlene Trach, Board of Governors; Jo Ann Smith – Indigenous Education Coordinator & Advisor; and Deb Carty, VP External Relations