

DISABILITY RESOURCE NETWORK OF BC FOR POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

2024

Message from your DRNBC Conference Planning Committee

Welcome and thank you for taking your time to read your 2024 DRNBC newsletter!

DRNBC has several committees, one of which is the Provincial Executive Committee and it has the following functions:

- Support the DRNBC's mandate
- Represent field based concerns in a coordinated fashion to the Provincial Ministries responsible for post-secondary education
- Raise public and government awareness about the educational needs of people with disabilities
- Identify issues of interest and concern to the members of DRNBC
- Be an information sharing body to all personnel regarding disability related issues in the post secondary system

Please visit our website to learn more about our provincial organization: <http://www.drNBC.org/>

The DRNBC is actively recruiting interested individuals to sit on several of our provincial communities. We currently are recruiting for the following committees:

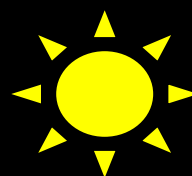
- Membership Committee
- Award Nominations Committee
- Advocacy Committee
- Executive Committee

Recently, our committees have combined forces, as we only consist of 9 team members. If you are interested please let us know and we'd be happy to talk to you about each of the committees. Please email Brittany Casey at caseyb@douglascollege.ca if you are interested.

The DRNBC for PSE is a provincial organization committed to providing programs and services, professional development, resources and news events that effect individuals who have a disability (disabilities), in the British Columbia Post Secondary Education system.

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This year we planned and hosted a one day conference on May 21, 2024 at Vancouver Community College.

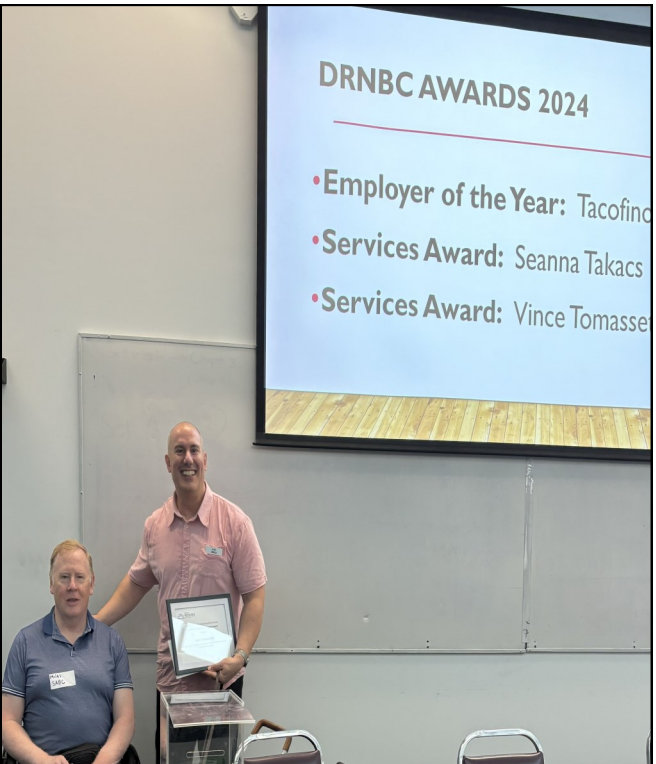
On May 21, 2024 our DRNBC team hosted our first in-person event since COVID-19. It was held at Vancouver Community College downtown campus. The theme was “*Navigating Current Trends in Post-Secondary Education for Diverse Learning Styles*”. We had some incredible presentations including Fizza Haider (UFV), Gwen Nguyen (BCcampus) and Lucas Wright (UBC), who spoke about AI and how it may support diverse learners in post-secondary and things to consider around accessibility/ethical use, cultural considerations/limitations etc. We also heard from a remarkable panel, with representatives from the ministry (Sarah Omware and Krissi Spinoza), UBC (Nicole Gareau-Wilson), and KPU (Seanna Takacs and Fiona Whittington-Walsh) about the new Accessible British Columbia Act and what that means for post-secondary.

Mark Orcullo studying in Disability and Community Studies at Douglas College also attended and helped us out for the day. We had 61 people from various sectors across BC attend. A former Douglas College Career and Employment Preparation student, donated this beautiful cutting board for one of our door prizes from his business Exotic Lumber Kreations. We also had some other cool prizes from Dis da Bomb, Gabi and Jules, Happy Flappy Stim and two planters from KPU Horticulture Department.

Tacofino catered a delicious lunch for our conference. They support many VCC students on work experience and hire inclusively. They won our Employer of the Year award. Dr Seanna Takacs from KPU and Vince Tomasetti from Assistive Technology BC were also recipients of our awards, which celebrate excellence in our field.



Pictures from our event on May 21, 2024



International Day for Persons with Disabilities

By Davi Bachra, Kiren Uppal and Brittany Casey

This year our Vocational Education and Skills Training students got involved in events for International Day for Persons with Disabilities at Douglas College. Food Services students prepared drinks including coffee and a blended smoothie to serve to guests. It was a great way for students to practice industry skills, including taking orders, customer service, food safe, and get involved in campus life.

One VEST student also sat on a panel to share their experience of living with a disability. This student has taken our Career and Employment Preparation Program and Food Services program at Douglas College and is currently working on campus at Tim Horton's. Other VEST students came out to listen to the amazing panelist.



North Island College: Campbell River Campus

Students in the Employment Transition Grounds and Custodial Access (ETGCA) program are nearing the end of their program. The ETGCA runs from January 2024 to June 2024. They spent January - April attending employability prep classes and collecting work related certificates like FoodSafe, First Aid, WHIMIS, and worker safety. With generous support from our local businesses, students participated in work experience placements in the community gaining industry specific work skills (an ETGCA student pictured working at the CR Museum).

Students just completed the middle portion of the program which included training courses in Horticulture and Grounds Maintenance and Custodial Light Duty Cleaning. Presently our students are out on a final practicum in either grounds/horticultural work or custodial. The ETGCA program is funded through the last remaining funds of the specific targeted funding through Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training.



CapU collaborates with North Shore Rescue to improve inclusivity and access



From left to right: Kathy Moscrip, students Isabelle and Tia from Discover Employability, Dean Brad Martin, student Vala from Education and Employment Access and Alison Hale at the opening of the Arnold Wallner Search and Rescue base.

Capilano University's (CapU) Access Programs department has partnered with North Shore Rescue (NSR) to develop initiatives aimed at improving safety and inclusivity for individuals of all abilities, such as people on the autism spectrum and neurodiverse individuals with sensory, communication or learning challenges.

North Shore Rescue, known for their critical rescue operations, recognized the unique challenges faced by neurodiverse individuals during emergencies. In addition to training their rescue teams, NSR wanted to develop inclusive educational videos that teach safety protocols for outdoor activities.

That's when they reached out to Alison Hale, coordinator of CapU's Access Programs department, for feedback to make their educational content more inclusive and accessible.

CapU students in the Discover Employability (DE) and Education and Employment Access (EEA) programs became consultants and played a pivotal role by providing feedback on a video NSR created for the public. They highlighted aspects like avoiding graphic content that might be distressing and ensuring there are options for closed captioning and interactive elements that are paced appropriately. They also noted the importance of not assuming the neurodiverse individual was the one who got lost, as they may have been with family or friends who wandered off.

This opportunity was a chance for students to be engaged and included in a meaningful way from the start of a project and not just at the end.

"Inclusion is not about simply being visible, but about being valued, respected and actively involved," said Alison Hale, coordinator and instructor, Access Programs department.

Hale presented the feedback to NSR, who also consulted with an occupational therapist, a speech language pathologist, a behaviour interventionist, parent advocates and educators, and will begin video production inclusive of the feedback they received. Vala, a student in the Education and Employment Access program and a talented musician, created the music for the video.

Looking ahead, NSR is keen to expand their collaboration with CapU, exploring more ways to integrate inclusion and access into their operations. NSR plans to feature CapU students and their work in upcoming video production, ensuring authentic representation. The team is also planning ways to provide practicums and training opportunities to the students in Access Programs in the future.

ESTR's Market at Thompson Rivers University

celebrates a decade of building skills

KAMLOOPS — Thompson Rivers University's Education and Skill Training Program — ESTR for short — provides skills training and knowledge to folks in the community who face barriers to employment. The ESTR program identifies students' strengths and then helps build skills and confidence before students get practicum opportunities, and ultimately, a job.

ESTR's Market is a space where students can practice those skills in a practical setting. It was founded a decade ago with a cart that was parked once a week in TRU's Old Main building selling home-made soup or chilli and bannock. Since then, it has grown into a whole storefront full of locally-produced snacks and handmade gifts, and still offers some of the best soup you can get on campus.

"We started in 2014 with the idea of creating a real-life training lab for both kitchen and retail training students in the Education and Skills Training program," Saskia Stinson, one of the people who helped found the ESTR's Market, explains.

The ESTR Program at TRU is designed for anyone who might experience barriers to employment. Through the program, many grads have gone on to find jobs or have continued their educations in other programs at the university.

"We have students who have gone through Culinary Arts. We have students who are in Early Childhood Education. We have students who are in Arts or Fine Arts, and they often carry on the upgrade in the UPrep department," Stinson says. "It's become about these students finding their purpose."

The students focus on their strengths and have the opportunity to explore different skills that could be useful in a job search.

“Before I started, my dream was to cook,” program grad James Spinks explains. “I like to learn a lot of stuff. Right now, I’m studying spices. I travelled over to Japan for ten days and learned a ton about Japanese cooking.”

Daniel McLean works at Sweláps Market and learned many useful skills through the ESTR program.

“Just to get ready for what’s out there,” McLean says. “Getting resumes done, cover letter. Just to get out of my comfort zone and get ready for work.” The social interaction is a huge part of ESTR. Many grads stay in touch with one another after they finish the program.

“I keep in contact with a lot of my classmates that I graduated with,” Angel Phair, a 2017 grad tells *CFJC Today*. “It was nice seeing them [today] but I keep in contact with them.”

Thursday’s 10-year anniversary celebration served as an opportunity to celebrate the faculty that helped create the ESTR program, the students who have graduated, as well as the ones who are still learning and growing their skills and confidence every day. “We see them build a life and feel like they’re part of their community,” Stinson says.



<https://cfjctoday.com/2024/03/07/estrs-market-at-thompson-rivers-university-celebrates-a-decade-of-building-skills/>

Announcing the Recipients of the 2024 West Coast Teaching Excellence Awards



The [British Columbia Teaching and Learning Council](#) (BCTLC) is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2024 West Coast Teaching Excellence

Awards. This year's recipients are Saskia Stinson, Thompson Rivers University, and Will Valley, University of British Columbia.

Saskia Stinson is recognized for her clear passion for supporting learners and her strong commitment to student success. The award adjudication committee felt that the experiential project at the heart of her teaching and learning design distinguished her from other candidates.

“The committee would like to acknowledge the outstanding community relationships Saskia has developed to support students, including collaborations with Indigenous Elders. Her commitment to decolonization and equity for students is truly inspirational.”

- *Janine Hirtz and Maxwell Stevenson, co-chairs of the award adjudication committee, BCTLC*

<https://bccampus.ca/2024/04/04/announcing-the-recipients-of-the-2024-west-coast-teaching-excellence-awards/>

At Vancouver Island University (VIU),

our dedicated faculty, backed by strong institutional support, have launched two innovative social enterprises that offer invaluable work-integrated learning experiences for students enrolled in our Workplace Essential Skills and Training (WEST) program.

One of these initiatives is the WEST Café Training Lab. Here, students transfer skills acquired in the classroom into a real-world setting, managing the café and honing their expertise in food safety, customer service, and numeracy. Through hands-on experience, they prepare fresh coffee, bake items such as cookies and muffins, which are then sold across the campus to fellow students and faculty, fostering a practical understanding of the food service industry. Students also take the 'coffee cart' as seen in the photo above out to neighbouring building on campus where they offer snack and beverage service. This has been a highly successful initiative, offering our students a wealth of experience while also fostering an inclusive campus environment.



(VIU Continued)

Early in 2024, our faculty and first-year WEST students launched a car detailing service for the public, which was met with resounding success and a fully booked schedule! This venture provided an excellent platform for students interested in trades, bridging connections with both the WEST and trades faculty. The car detailing service not only enriched their practical skills but also opened pathways for future career opportunities in trades.



(VIU Continued)



All proceeds from these social enterprises are funneled into the WEST Foundation at VIU, reinforcing our commitment to supporting our students. The funds earned are used to assist first-time employees and provide bursaries to graduates aspiring to advance into other programs.

These initiatives exemplify the power of experiential learning, showcasing how VIU's innovative programs are creating a brighter future for our students while enriching the broader community.

Submitted by Deanne Schulz

Vancouver Island University

Discover Your Entrepreneurial Potential with CETP!

Are you ready to turn your great business idea into a reality? CETP is designed to help individuals with diverse abilities learn the essential skills needed to successfully run their own businesses. Whether you have a learning disability, are differently abled, or face other barriers to employment, CETP offers the support you need to achieve your business dreams.

Who Can Participate in CETP?

CETP is open to anyone over the age of 17 with a learning or physical challenge or other barrier to employment. You don't need a documented disability to join the program; self-identification is welcome. If you do have a documented disability, you may be eligible for grants to cover program costs. Before entering the program, it's helpful to have a clear idea of the business you want to start. Since the program is delivered online, it's accessible to anyone in Canada.

What Will You Learn?

- **Entrepreneurial Thinking:** Develop a mindset that embraces innovation and creativity.
- **Business Strategy:** Learn how to plan and execute a successful business model.
- **Financial Literacy:** Understand financial management to keep your business thriving.
- **Marketing Skills:** Master both digital and traditional marketing techniques.

Mentorship and Support

You will be paired with a mentor who runs a business similar to the one you aspire to start. Your mentor will provide valuable advice and support to help you navigate the challenges of entrepreneurship.

Financial Assistance

Our advisors are ready to assist you in accessing funding for the course once you've applied. This ensures that financial barriers do not stand in the way of your entrepreneurial journey.

Learn More: Watch this informative video to get a deeper insight into CETP: [Watch the Video](#).

If you're interested in the program or have any questions, feel free to reach out to Amy Woermke at amy.woermke@viu.ca.



CONGRATULATIONS!



In 2006, we established the “Wall of Fame” which was intended to honour the commitment and legacy of retired or soon to be retiring colleagues.

Each year we also honour the wonderful work that is being done in BC’s Post-Secondary system to assist people with disabilities to achieve their education and employment goals. There are 3 categories: Service, Program and Corporate (employer). This year we only received submissions for Service and Corporate. Since we have received Programs over the last two years, we decided to select two people from Services this year.

2024: Wall of Fame (Retirees)

Darryl Gorrie — Camosun College

Maureen Mills—Vancouver Community College

Ingrid Defert— Vancouver Community College

2024: Services Awards

Vince Tomasetti — Assistive Technology BC

Seanna Takacs — Kwantlen Polytechnic University

2024: Corporate Award

Tacofino — Taylor Chobotiuk

Special Recognition presented for the passing of Dave Symington