

# NEWS

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## Issues

### Forum draws 90% approval rating

The writing was on the wall.

The wrap up of Friday's VCC Issues Forum called for the "issues posters" from each of the 14 study groups to be taped to the back wall of the KEC auditorium.

Add them all up and the count came to a couple of hundred ideas. Boil them all down and it came to two input and information

People want to be told, and they want to be heard. As Wayne Matthewson, one of the study session facilitators summed it up: "What I'm hearing is that people want to have real input; that we don't want our input to disappear into a vacuum." Or, as another of the 130 participants explained "I know that decisions need to be made and that I won't always agree with them. I accept that. But we all want to know that it's not just token participation and that we're really being heard in the process."

During a day that had numerous highlights of hope--as well as shadows of discontent--the lack of interactive communications appeared as the most widespread issue. It started by leading the list of concerns in the pre-forum questionnaire, and continued to play a part in virtually every topic of discussion throughout the day.

Problems were expressed not just with administrative communications, which seemed to be viewed at least as on the upswing. People were also disturbed about poor communications with the public, industry, and students during registration time; poor communications between employees of the two campuses, between the faculty union and its membership, between the Board and the employees; participants were saying that they are not getting relevant information from the provincial government on its plans for the College.

A few comments:

\* "We have two groups of employees (City Centre and KEC) who have very little understanding of each other."

\* "We have a terrible external image because of the strikes. People have the idea that we're not a reliable place to come."

\* "We need a centralized registration system with easy access. If you work on the front line, you need to be able to tell students about all parts of the College. The way it is now is almost word-of-mouth."

\* "The government seems to dictate the most important things that happen here, but the government doesn't say boo to us about what it's thinking."

\* "The VCCFA members at either campus just don't know or understand each other. There's a lot of talk about a split in the union over the workload issue. The Langara split may well be repeated again, first within the union and then between City Centre and KEC."

\* "I turn on the TV and see ads for Compu-college all the time. We can't tell people about ourselves because there is no advertising budget."

\* Part time CE instructor Gerald Paul, a B.C. Tel employee by day, offered a view from the outside. "You can sit in any office at B.C. Tel and you'll see a framed copy of the mission statement on the wall. When the thought of a mission statement came up in our group we were told it was locked away in a drawer somewhere."

Even the Mooch Lake Community College--a fictitious case study which participants worked through as an initial planning exercise--was blamed for poor communications and near meaningless participation from employees. As expected, most saw similarities between Mooch and VCC.

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The bottom line of the equation is that a lack of communications equals a lack of trust

Said Board Chair Bob Smith. "I am worried most by the level of trust. And I ask you to help us work at that."

Ironically, it was the day itself that added more to communications and trust at the college than any other event in recent memory. IMS photographer Lauch McKenzie, who moved throughout the study groups, put it this way: "Every group was interesting. Some were really spirited and all of them were articulate. And everybody seemed so sincere that they wanted to find a better way. It was really amazing."

Wayne Penny of Pacific Leadership Incorporated, which helped organize this initial phase in the VCC planning process, said he was delighted, and a bit surprised, at the level of enthusiasm.

"There was some initial scepticism, but as the morning unfolded people found that despite the fact that they come from different parts of the institution, a lot of their concerns were similar and that they really have some common ground which can be used to work toward a preferred future for VCC." Of those who returned the post-forum questionnaire, 90 per cent assessed the day as a four or a five on a scale of one to five.

Penny said that phase two of the process will include the development of statements for visions, values and goals, followed by a third phase which will see specific action taken to achieve those objectives.

A participant at the closing plenary session worried that Friday's openness would be a one-day wonder.

Answered President John Cruickshank. "This has been one of the greatest days of my time here. If you think this is going to stall here, you couldn't be more wrong."

## ***World class cooking by student chefs***

The Centres of Excellence concept is an idea which will be receiving a lot of discussion over the next few months, but here's one tangible example of excellence which was just achieved by City Centre's Culinary Arts Team.

This team of student chefs, led by Instructors Jim Hutton and Harald Bonkowski, recently entered the International Taste of Canada competition held at George Brown College in Toronto.

It was the first time VCC has entered this prestigious event and the College's fifth place finish out of 34 international teams would have been remarkable enough. Until you consider that the only teams that finished higher were the **national teams** of Germany, the U.S., Great Britain and Singapore.

In addition, the VCC team placed first out of the 12 participating Canadian teams, and second only to the German national team in the hot food category. In other words, VCC's team of student chefs placed right up there with the all-star squads which were drawn from the talent pool of entire countries.

This extraordinary performance, which was rewarded with a \$4,000 scholarship prize, represents excellence on an international scale--which, by the way, is exactly the level of achievement which the Ministry is calling for in the Centres of Excellence approach.

Our hat's off to the two managers, and all of the team members. Richard Luttman, Morgan Wilson, Iain Rennie, Scott Jaeger and Rhonda Viani.



### ***Up to \$17 million for Langara expansion***

Following the announcement two weeks ago that the Ministry would provide \$1 million for planning an expansion of Langara, the government has now confirmed that the total cost for the project is expected to be approximately \$15 million. The Ministry also indicated that a further \$2 million would be available for renovations associated with the construction.

The project calls for two new buildings which will increase classroom and administration space by about 20 per cent.

### ***Arnold, Gerson named as acting deans***

Acting Langara CEO Linda Holmes has announced the appointment of Linda Arnold and Martin Gerson as Acting Deans of Instruction until December 31, 1993.

These acting appointments were made in light of a concern for providing a consistent, stable structure for the instructional areas during Joan Horsley's absence. In addition to their other duties surrounding the planning process, they will also take on Joan's responsibilities until she returns.

### ***Acting post at IMS for Bob Lajoie***

Bob Lajoie has been appointed as Acting Director of IMS until Bruce MacLean returns from sick leave.

### ***Stanley Theatre proposed for music, theatre students***

College Board members Stephen Huddart and Gerry Schwartz are involved in a proposal which may see both KEC music students and Langara's Theatre 58 students performing regularly at the Stanley Theatre.

The Granville Street Stanley was closed as a movie theatre last year by its owner, Famous Players. More recently, a concept from the Theatre-sports company proposes a redevelopment of the building to include some ground level retail outlets--as well as two performing spaces within the renovated complex.

Under VCC's plan, the music and theatre programs would share 13 weeks in one of the spaces over a 15-year term. This theatre would seat between 200 and 500 people, and would be rented to other groups for the balance of the year. Funding for the arrangement would, of course, have to come from the Ministry.

Huddart cautions that this proposal is still a long way from being realized.

**If you have any  
comments or questions,  
please send them to  
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Services.**