

CONTINUING EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Comox Valley Campus

Renee Reedel, Continuing Education Program Officer

Activity Assistant Certificate Program Certificate

Students seeking to expand their professional training for rewarding careers in Long Term Care took full advantage of our January 2026 intake. We continue to attract students from Vancouver Island, the BC Interior, Northern BC and beyond. Employment in this field remains very robust, with many participants being offered conditional employment positions even before the program is finished. Our Spring semester is already starting to fill with a start date of May 6, 2026.

First Aid

First Aid activities include completing a very successful 3 weeks of consecutive training out of Port Hardy with a new interest list for more courses in the works. Marine Advanced First Aid classes continue to fill up in Cambell River and Comox as well. The community of Sointula also has an upcoming contract for Emergency First Aid at the end of May.

Cambell River Campus

Lorraine Hagan, Continuing Education Program Officer

Stronger BC Future Skills Grant Program

The 3rd cohort of Marine Essentials FSG students wrapped up on March 26th after another well-delivered course enjoyed by all.

Other successful programs recently delivered include a BC Wildfire Essentials and Building Service Worker.

Metal Jewellery

Metal Jewellery Studio, a seven-week micro-credential, added a 4th level which wrapped up on April 10th. Interest remains high with student inquiries coming in for the next academic year.

Other News

Demand for industry credentials, such as Commercial Vehicle Worker and Forklift Operator training, as well as FoodSafe, and Marine First Aid continues to be strong at this time.

Many requests for contract training for both Marine and other customized training have been received, with a recent marine training contract in Port McNeil taking place in March, and a 10-month long project starting in mid-April with a local First Nation to deliver a variety of skills training including study/life skills, digital/clerical skills, and hospitality training.

In addition, a three-month long Carpentry Level 2 training program started on March 3rd at Kingcome Inlet and will conclude at the end of May.

The last cohort of Hospital Unit Clerk students have just written exams and started their practicums on March 30th.

Port Alberni Campus

Leanne Moore, Continuing Education Program Officer

Fundamentals of Sustainable and Innovative Manufacturing Microcredential

The Fundamentals of Sustainable and Innovative Manufacturing Microcredential program is in full swing in partnership with Alberni Valley Makerspace, which was awarded a Rural Diversification and Infrastructure Program (REDIP) grant. Students are thriving in this hybrid model that blends fast-paced production environments, where they conceptualize, plan, and execute their own projects using newly introduced tools and software. This hands-on approach fosters critical thinking and problem-solving skills while providing direct experience with advanced technologies, such as 3D printing, laser cutting, and engraving. Students will also learn to repurpose materials like plastics, using the resources available at the Alberni Valley Makerspace to promote sustainable design and innovation.



The first intake of the program ran in the fall of 2025, with a full cohort of 8 students who completed the program. The spring intake is set to start on April 7th with a full cohort of 8 students. Another program will be offered in the fall of 2026.

Boat Repair and Engine Maintenance Workshop

NIC's CET and Indigenous Education's partnership with Ha'oom Fisheries Society to develop and deliver a hands-on course designed for boat owners is also in full swing with a few of the sessions having completed. This workshop provides a practical understanding of small fishing vessel systems and an introduction to emergency preparedness and is delivered through a combination of classroom instruction and hands-on application. Participants have been learning skills for basic maintenance and repair and troubleshooting key onboard systems with safety in mind.

This hands-on training has taken place in Gold River, Ahousaht, Port Alberni, and Tofino, with dates scheduled for Campbell River.

Marine Training Contracts

We have secured a contract for June with Coastal Restoration Society (CRS), in Port Alberni. The training will include Small Vessel Operator (SVOP), Small Domestic Vessel Basic Safety (SDV-BS), Restricted Radio Operator Certificate (ROC-M), and Marine Basic First Aid for 12 students. This training is funded by the Canada Retraining and Opportunities Initiative (CROI) awarded to Synergy Foundation.

Green Building Foundations/ Manufacturing & Deconstruction

Through the Synergy Foundation and the Canada Retraining and Opportunities Initiative, CET is delivering Manufacturing and Deconstruction & Green Building Foundation programs.

Currently, there are 15 students attending the 5-week Green Building Foundations & Manufacturing program that began March 9th, 2026. The training initiative is designed to equip participants with safety certification and introduce skills for careers in the construction and manufacturing industries. IGV Housing, a new manufacturing plant in Port Alberni, has extended job offers to the students who complete the program.



Recruitment has begun for the 6-week Building Deconstruction and Construction Training Program that is scheduled to start in May. This program is designed to prepare participants for careers in building deconstruction, salvage, and skilled labor roles within the construction industry. The program includes safety certification, participants will learn to handle hazardous materials, build scaffolding, perform general labor, and use construction tools and equipment. In addition to deconstruction, construction skills will cover key topics including safe work practices, proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE), tool handling and maintenance, understanding carpentry materials and systems, and building an entry-level project.

Stronger BC Future Skills Grant Programs

The Future Skills Grant supported the delivery of three programs at the Port Alberni campus this school year which have now concluded. These included the Applied Human Resources Practitioner Microcredential, which had 15 participants, as well as the Building Service Worker Comprehensive and BC Wildfire Essentials programs, each of which had 10 participants.

Applied Rural & Indigenous Community Economic Development Micro-Credential Program

The Ministry of Post-Secondary Education & Future Skills awarded North Island College funding to develop a micro-credential program to train a skilled workforce, promote economic resilience and support the current and future needs of rural and Indigenous communities. To support meaningful consultation with partners across the province, a project extension was granted. Our revised timeline includes completing curriculum development and launching the first two courses in spring 2026, followed by the remaining program rollout in fall 2026.

The program is an NIC-led joint venture with six other participating public rural colleges. NIC has formed an advisory committee to engage with local communities, industry experts, and First Nations to build a program and curriculum plan that best aligns with the visions and needs of those communities.

ARTS, SCIENCE AND MANAGEMENT

Submitted by Neil Cruickshank, Dean, Arts, Science & Management

School District Dual Credit Expansion

An important update is that our local school districts (with the support of NIC) will be advancing a plan to expand and harmonize dual credit programming across the north Island – from Port Alberni to Campbell River (and all the SDs in-between). There is a desire to emulate, as much as possible, the South Island Partnership. We don't know how many courses will be required or which departments will be called upon to support this, but this is great news for the Faculty of Arts, Science & Management, nonetheless. We had representatives from the various SDs here a few weeks ago to initiate the planning process, and I intend to meet with them again soon.

For those unfamiliar, the South Island Partnership is an agreement between Camosun College and 'South Island' school districts that encourages collaboration between the districts, and Camosun, to offer enhanced dual credit opportunities across the South Island and, ultimately, "reduce barriers that prevent students from participating in the dual credit programming."

Engineering Teams Food and Farming Hackathon

At the recent Food and Farming Hackathon, NIC engineering teams finished one-two. This is a remarkable accomplishment. Congratulations to the students. And kudos to the faculty and staff (Anita, Dennis and Nicole) that supported this opportunity. The same group was responsible for 'engineering' an industry networking event, as well. It was at this event that NIC students were able to interact with prospective employers and local Engineers.



HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

New Health Programming

Helen La Rusic, Program Specialist

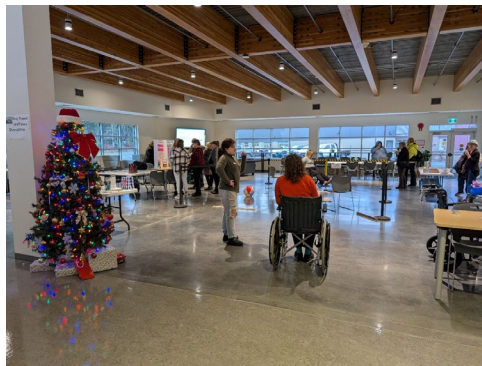
The Faculty of Health and Human Services is pleased to announce the expansion of nursing education opportunities across our regional campuses. Beginning in Winter 2027, HHS will offer the Access to Practical Nursing program at the Port Alberni campus, providing a pathway for 24 Health Care Assistants to advance their credentials and complete a Practical Nursing Diploma. These initiatives reflect our continued commitment to increasing access to healthcare education and supporting workforce development in our communities.

Diversity Showcase, Accessible Education and Training

Submitted by Liz Girard, Accessible Education and Training Chair

On December 3rd, 2025, Campbell River students in Accessible Education and Training hosted a **Diversity Showcase** that drew attendees from both NIC and the broader community. Students spent over two months preparing, developing six interactive activities to highlight their strengths and abilities while educating attendees about diversabilities.

Student facilitators expressed joy in being seen and heard, and shared feelings of pride in confidently engaging with the public as topic leaders. Visitors noted how much they learned from the students, were impressed by the students' preparation and confidence, and valued gaining insight into the experiences of people with diversabilities.



Education Assistant and Community Support Worker Cohort

Submitted by Amanda Pope, Human Services Instructor

This year, students in the Comox Valley cohort of the Human Services – Education Assistant and Community Support Worker (EA/CSW) certificate program engaged in rich, applied learning experiences that bridged theory and practice in meaningful ways. In addition to their practicum placements, students benefited from a variety of hands-on opportunities and community partnerships that deepened their understanding of inclusive support strategies.

A key component of applied learning came through a variety of guest speakers from the local school district. Students participated in a presentation on the Low Arousal Approach to supporting behavior, an evidence-informed framework that has been adopted by the district. They were then

able to apply these principles in a hands-on workshop, practicing strategies to reduce escalation and support students in a calm, respectful manner.

Students also expanded their skills in communication support through a session led by a Speech-Language Pathologist, who introduced them to Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC). This learning was highly experiential, as students explored a range of AAC tools—from single-message devices to more complex communication apps. With the department's purchase of iPads equipped with AAC applications and devices such as the GoTalk20+, students further developed practical skills in using and customizing these tools, as well as supporting individuals to communicate effectively using AAC.

Collaboration was another highlight of the program this year. EA/CSW students partnered with the Accessible Education and Training (AET) department, where AET students joined classes to share their lived experiences of working with Education Assistants and Community Support Workers. This exchange provided valuable insight into person-centered practice and strengthened students' understanding of the impact of their role from the perspective of those they support.

Overall, the Comox Valley EA/CSW cohort experienced a year of dynamic, hands-on learning that emphasized practical skill development, collaboration, and responsiveness to real-world practice.

TRADES AND TECHNICAL PROGRAMS

Trades Update

Submitted by Agnes Sharkie, Admin Support Assistant

Despite some ups and downs with the weather in March, a new season was officially declared on the 20th. March didn't exactly go out like a lion but temperatures still dictated fleece was not ready to be banished to the back of the wardrobe. Now, hopefully the arrival of April promises warm breezes carrying the smell of new blossoms and fresh cut grass. Trees are springing back to life from the stark winter hibernation to welcome the stellar jays, robins and chickadees eager to nest within the shelter of their branches and gardens are teeming with new sprouts making their way up to greet the sun.

Trades and Technical students have been busy writing their SkilledTradesBC Standard Level and Red Seal Exams in Welding, Heavy Mechanical, Electrical, Carpentry, and Plumbing Apprenticeships with 12 more to come across all levels between April and the end of June. Automotive Service Technician programs in Campbell River and Port Alberni will be complete by the first week in April and the Furniture Design and Joinery students will complete mid-May. Electrical, Plumbing and Carpentry foundations will continue on until July and the Campbell River Welding Foundation cohort will have students writing their SLE on August 13th. Heavy Mechanical Foundation will soldier on through to October.

Professional Cook Level 1 returned to the Port Alberni campus on January 26th with 11 students under Chef Jonathan Frazier. Jonathan is moving the students through a full restaurant experience through the operation of the teaching bistro, *Roger Street Bistro*. Service is now open to the public three days a week (Tuesday through Thursday), 11:30am – 1:00pm and will continue with this schedule through to the end of May.

The bistro is entirely student-run as part of their practical training. Students rotate through all key kitchen and front-of-house roles, including food preparation, line cooking, plating, expediting, and service. This rotation ensures they build a well-rounded skill set and understand the full scope of a working kitchen.

A key component of this experience is the daily changing menu. Students are responsible for preparing and executing fresh dishes each day, which helps simulate a real-world culinary environment where adaptability, organization, and teamwork are essential. This approach reinforces both their technical skills and their ability to respond to the dynamic nature of food service.



The Professional Cook students at the Campbell River campus have finished their Level 1 program. Before writing their Standard Level Exam on March 26th students were graded on the Practical component of their program and we are pleased to say all students were successful. Students are now carrying on to Level 2 training which means evening service in the Bistro will return on set dates with a full, but different, buffet each night. If you haven't contacted Melody White yet and you would like to attend what always proves to be an amazing experience, you may want to reach out sooner rather than later. Buffet dates are April 15th, 22nd, 29th, May 13th, June 3rd and June 10th.

Hands-On Students!

Updates from Paris Gaudet, Program Officer

Student Employment

Through NIC's student employment funding, two Welding Foundation students were hired as Shop Assistants at the Campbell River campus and one at the Port Alberni campus. In addition, two students from the Electrical Foundation program were employed as Shop Assistants at the Campbell River campus. These positions play an important role in supporting students' transition from classroom learning to applied, hands-on work in a real trades training environment.

The Shop Assistant roles provide students with valuable, paid employment directly aligned with their program of study. Supporting instructors and faculty in day-to-day shop operations allow students to strengthen their technical skills while gaining a deeper understanding of shop safety standards, tool and equipment maintenance, material handling, and workplace organization. This practical exposure reinforced core program competencies and helped students build confidence working in an active trades setting.

Student employment positions in the Trades contribute to student success by enhancing learning outcomes, supporting retention, and helping students graduate with meaningful work experience that strengthens their readiness for employment in the trades.

Work Experience Placements

Eight students in the Electrical Foundations program at the Campbell River campus participated in

one week of unpaid work experience in January 2026 with regional companies including Bridge Electrical Systems, Drewry Electrical, Osprey Electric, and Houle Electric. These placements provided value offering students meaningful early exposure to the workforce while enabling employers to play an active role in shaping and supporting the next generation of skilled trades professionals.

Work experience is a valuable asset to Foundation-level trades programs and plays an important role in supporting students as they explore, confirm, and prepare for their chosen career paths. For students who may be uncertain about a future in the trades, work experience provides clarity by exposing them to real-world working conditions, employer expectations, and day-to-day job demands that cannot be fully replicated in a classroom setting.

Through participation in work experience placements, students applied technical skills learned at the College in live job-site environments, reinforcing classroom knowledge through direct, hands-on practice. Students gained firsthand experience with workplace safety culture, job-site organization, task prioritization, and professional communication with supervisors, journeypersons, and coworkers. These experiences helped students better understand how technical training translates into productive work on-site and emphasize the importance of reliability, adaptability, and problem-solving in the field.

Work experience also supported and reinforces essential employability skills including punctuality, teamwork, accountability, and the ability to follow workplace protocols and instructions. Immersion in a professional environment allowed students to build confidence, increase self-awareness of their strengths and areas for improvement, and develop a clearer understanding of the performance and interpersonal expectations of the trades industry.

Industry partners benefited from these placements by gaining early access to emerging talent, contributing to workforce development, and supporting the training of potential future apprentices. Employers were able to mentor students, introduce them to current workplace practices and standards, and assess skills and work readiness in a real-world setting. These placements strengthened connections between the College and local employers, supporting industry engagement and helping ensure training remains aligned with evolving workforce needs.

Community Support

The Port Alberni Automotive students will reap the rewards from the local Golden Oldies Car Club and M&D Auto Parts thanks to their instructor, Dan Brochu. Not only will a representative from M&D Auto Parts be presenting each student with a gift of \$50, but on April 2nd the top student will also receive a brand-new toolbox complete with a full set of tools. The Golden Oldies Club will be presenting the 2nd place student with a \$1000 cheque. Impressive and valuable gifts to start new graduates on their way!

Dan's dedication to community engagement has not only benefited his students, but he has garnered support for the growth of the Port Alberni Automotive program with the possibility of equipment donations that would promote student success. We are so grateful for Dan's hard work and the generosity of the community.

OFFICE OF GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT**International Education and Global Engagement – Key Updates**

Submitted by Romana Pasca, Director, International Education

International Recruitment

OGE welcomed 13 international students for the January intake and received over 230 applications for Fall 2026, indicating continued strong interest in North Island College programs despite ongoing delays in study permit processing.

To mitigate visa processing challenges, OGE is strengthening strategic recruitment partnerships with Canadian-based agents, focusing on regions with shorter processing timelines. In parallel, local recruitment efforts were expanded through engagement and direct outreach to international high school students from school district leadership in the Comox Valley, Campbell River, and Port Alberni.

International Indigenous Field School (May–June 2026): OGE is working in close collaboration with the Indigenous Education Office to develop NIC’s first International Indigenous Field School. This initiative brings together Indigenous students from Hawai’i, Aotearoa New Zealand, Mexico, and Vancouver Island, Canada.

The field school is grounded in principles of respect, responsibility, and relationship-building, and emphasizes learning through shared experiences connected to Indigenous cultures and territories. The program supports understanding of Indigenous knowledge as living practice, encourages reflection on personal and collective responsibilities, and contributes to processes of healing and cultural revitalization, while acknowledging the diversity of Indigenous peoples and the ongoing impacts of colonialism.

This initiative represents a significant milestone for NIC and aligns with institutional commitments to Indigenous engagement and internationalization.

Japan Field School (June 2026): Twelve domestic students will participate in a field school in Japan, combining urban and rural learning experiences. The program includes visits to Fukuoka, Wakayama, Osaka, Mio, and Tokyo, with a focus on cultural exchange, history, and local traditions. Students will engage in hands-on learning related to local fishing practices within Japan’s Indigenous communities and explore Canada’s historical connection to the town of Mio. The program is partially funded by the BC Scholarship Society, supporting accessible international experiential learning opportunities for NIC students.

Canadian International Development Scholarships (BCDI 2030) Electrical Training Program (October 2026): North Island College is a successful recipient of a Global Affairs Canada scholarship grant under the Canadian International Development Scholarships (BCDI 2030) program. This initiative provides fully funded scholarships for students from Cameroon to complete two semesters in NIC’s Electrician Foundation program. Participating students come from the National Higher Polytechnic Institute of the University of Bamenda and the National Polytechnic University Institute Bamenda. The program also includes a six-week preparatory module focused on technical vocabulary, workplace safety, and industry readiness. Upon completion, students will receive the Electrician Foundation Harmonized Certificate and return to their home institutions to complete their studies, contributing to strengthened technical capacity and international development outcomes.

Note: Reports from Continuing Education and Training (CET) come out three times a year: March, June and September.