

CONTINUING EDUCATION AND TRAINING (CET)
--

Comox Valley

Submitted by Sherryl Eagle, CE Program Officer

Animal Care Aide

A robust cohort of Animal Care Aides are well on their way through the 8-month program to becoming certified animal care aides. Fall 2025 marks the return to in-person classes for this program since Covid in 2020!

Stronger BC Future Skills Grant Program:

Applied Solar Photovoltaic Installation

In late October, a cohort of 8 students came together at CV Campus to learn about Solar PV and battery energy storage systems. This intensive program covered the basics of safety protocols all the way to designing and layout of a PV system. Battery energy storage system basics, safety and installation topics were also covered. The students all finished the course with a practical skill set, valuable in the renewable energy system industry.

Campbell River

Submitted by Lorraine Hagan, CE Program Officer

Stronger BC Future Skills Grant Program:

Applied Solar Photovoltaic Installation

A solar panel installation training program will take place in Campbell River from March 2 to 12 to provide training to students in Solar PV and battery energy storage systems. This program will cover the basics of safety protocols from designing to layout of PV systems along with battery energy storage system basics, safety and installation. The students will gain skills that are in demand in the growing renewable energy system sector.

Marine Essential Plus: Enhanced

Continuing Education and Training students enrolled in the Marine Essentials Plus: Enhanced program recently got some hands-on experience. The program covers all the Transport Canada certifications and skills needed to start a career in the marine industry. The class visited Qaya Way West Transportation, to learn about water tourism, crew boat and water taxi industry. After an engaging chat with GM Jason Johnson and Customer Service representative Emberlee Nuttal, the class watched a vessel pre-trip inspection of the "Nauti Cat" vessel. The students also enjoyed a one-hour tour of the Coast Marina in Campbell River from Operations Coordinator and Captain Shale Byrne, allowing students the opportunity to get some hands-on exposure to what life on the water is like.



As part of the Stronger BC Future Skills Grant program, Marine Essentials Plus: Enhanced will be offered again from January 7 to 30, 2026, with another tour scheduled for January 20. Additionally, a third program offering will take place from February 26 to March 26.

BC Wildfire Essentials

In response to a very active wildfire season, the BC Wildfire Essentials program will take place in Campbell River with funding available from the StrongerBC Future Skills Grant. Participants will gain hands-on experience and earn industry-recognized certifications in fire behavior and basic suppression techniques, pump operations and water delivery systems, helicopter safety and air tanker coordination, First Aid, and Incident Command Systems (ICS). Learners will gain practical skills that can open pathways to employment as wildland fire crew members.

Port Alberni

Submitted by Leanne Moore, CE Program Officer

Fundamentals of Sustainable and Innovative Manufacturing Microcredential

Alberni Valley Makerspace was awarded a Rural Diversification and Infrastructure Program (REDIP) grant that supports a partnership with CET to develop and deliver the Fundamentals of Sustainable and Innovative Manufacturing Microcredential. As part of this initiative, this introduction to hands-on manufacturing technologies micro-credential program spans six weeks and is designed to equip participants with both theoretical knowledge and practical skills in advanced manufacturing technologies. The program is ideal for individuals looking to enter the Innovation, Blue, and Creative Economies or transition from industries like forestry into high-demand manufacturing sectors. It follows a hybrid model that blends fast-paced production environments, where they will 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.



Photos of the students and their projects at Alberni Valley Makerspace

The first intake began on Oct 28, 2025, with a full cohort of 8 students. We will be delivering additional intakes in spring and fall of 2026 as well.

Boat Repair and Engine Maintenance Workshop

NIC's CET and Indigenous Education have partnered with Ha'oom Fisheries Society to develop and deliver a hands-on course designed for boat owners seeking a practical understanding of small fishing vessel systems and an introduction to emergency preparedness. Through a combination of classroom instruction and hands-on application, participants will gain essential knowledge and skills for basic maintenance and repair and troubleshoot key onboard systems with safety in mind. The first intake took place the week of November 24 in Tofino, with additional intakes planned for Ahousaht, Gold River, and Port Alberni.

Marine Training Contracts

CET successfully delivered two-week Marine training contracts for our valued community partner, Coastal Restoration Society (CRS), in both Port Alberni and Campbell River. The training included Small Vessel Operator (SVOP), Small Domestic Vessel Basic Safety (SDV-BS), Restricted Radio Operator Certificate (ROC-M), and Marine Basic First Aid for 24 CRS employees, supporting local capacity and sustainable marine operations for coastal communities.

Green Building Foundations/ Manufacturing & Deconstruction

Through the Synergy Foundation and the Canada Retraining and Opportunities Initiative, CET will be delivering Manufacturing and Deconstruction & Green Building Foundation programs:

- The Green Building Foundations & Manufacturing program is scheduled to begin in March. It is a 5-week training initiative designed to equip participants with safety certification and introduce skills for careers in the construction and manufacturing industry. IGV Housing, a new manufacturing plant in Port Alberni, will be recruiting potential employees to attend the program before starting their positions at IGV.
- The Building Deconstruction and Construction Training Program is scheduled to start in May and is a 6-week program 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:**Applied Human Resources Practitioner Microcredential**

This fall, through the Stronger BC Future Skills Grant funding, CET is offering 15 students a 12-week online course designed to build foundational human resources skills aligned with Canadian standards. Tailored for small and medium-sized businesses and not-for-profit organizations, the program equips administrative staff, managers and business owners with practical tools to manage recruitment, retention and compliance, especially in settings without dedicated HR departments.

Building Service Worker Comprehensive

CET hosted a 2-week Building Service Worker Comprehensive at the Port Alberni campus in November 2025. The program includes key certifications needed to work in private and public-sector buildings, including Building Services Worker Fundamentals, Hard Floor Care, Commercial Carpet Cleaning, WHMIS, FoodSafe & First Aid.

BC Wildfire Essentials

Following another devastating wildfire season during the summer of 2025 in the Alberni Valley region, the urgency to build local capacity has never been greater. In response, the BC Wildfire Essentials program will be offered this winter through funding from the StrongerBC Future Skills Grant. This comprehensive training initiative is designed to protect communities by preparing 15 individuals for frontline wildfire response. Participants will gain hands-on experience and earn industry-recognized certifications in fire behavior and basic suppression techniques, pump operations and water delivery systems, helicopter safety and air tanker coordination, First Aid, and Incident Command Systems (ICS). By equipping learners with practical skills, the BC Wildfire Essentials program opens pathways to employment as wildland fire crew members.

Applied Rural & Indigenous Community Economic Development Micro-Credential Program

The Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills awarded North Island College funding to develop a micro-credential program to help create more skilled workforces that will promote economic resilience and support the current and future needs of rural and Indigenous communities. 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. To support meaningful consultation with partners across the province, we have requested a project extension. Our revised timeline includes completing curriculum development and launching the first course in spring 2026, followed by the remaining program rollout in fall 2026.

ARTS, SCIENCE AND MANAGEMENT

Submitted by the Faculty of Arts, Science & Management (FASM)

Grant from Prostate Cancer Foundation Canada (PCFC)

Congratulations are due to Dr Rishi Somvanshi (Department of Math & Science) who secured a generous grant from PCFC in support of a Knowledge Translation (KT) initiative titled: "Applied Biochemistry for Knowledge Translation: Exploring Prostate Cancer in an Undergraduate College Lab". This project will support the development of a new lab module for our Island Pre-Health Science program. The lab(s) in question, BIO 301 and/or BIO 330, will now incorporate prostate cancer knowledge and related topics to enhance integrative learning opportunities for our

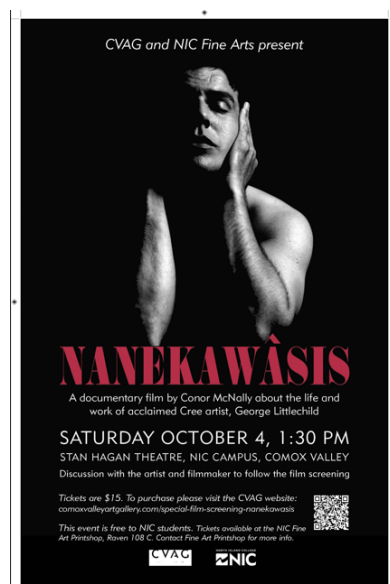
students.

Fine Arts Fall 2025 Artist Talk with George Littlechild and filmmaker Conor McNally

The Fine Arts department organized an Artist Talk with award winning Indigenous artist, George Littlechild. In collaboration with the Comox Valley Art Gallery, the screening of the Littlechild biography *nanekawâsis* was followed by a lively and humour-filled Q & A session with the artist (Littlechild), the filmmaker (McNally) and NIC's own Linda Perron and Elizabeth Russell, alongside Glen Sanford, Executive Director of the Comox Valley Art Gallery, and Denise Lawson, Director of Curatorial Programming. The event took place in the Stan Hagan theatre in the afternoon of 04 October. The popularity of Littlechild is evident as only a handful of seats remained unclaimed. All in all, it was an amazing event.

Fun Fact: The screening of *nanekawâsis* was the 143rd Artist Talk presentation for the Fine Arts Program.

Special thanks to Glen Sanford, Denise Lawson and Rhea Whitehead, CVAG Curatorial Assistant, Sara Vipond (who coordinated the collaboration for the screening with the gallery), Elizabeth Russell (who co-facilitated the discussion with George Littlechild and Conor McNally with Denise Lawson), Gabriella Hernandez – Fine Art Student (Raven Hall Gallery Assistant) and Tyler Hyrko Lab Tech, Fine Art and Digital Design who provided assistance during the event - as well as many other staff, faculty and volunteers.



Work Integrated Learning (WIL) Networking Event

Organized by our resident WIL coordinator, Anita Budisa-Bonneau, the WIL department held an informative mixer at Crown Isle Resort on 22 October, 2025. Our Business and Tourism & Hospitality Management students were invited to participate, learn and network. According to Anita's invitation:

This is a casual networking event—not a job fair—designed to help students learn more about local and regional organizations, and speak to representatives about their role, industry trends, and potential career opportunities. It's a great chance for organizations to raise their company profile on campus while connecting with students, faculty, staff, and other local businesses and celebrating our programming.

Along with students and faculty, a number of College administrators attended the event. Our VPA, Tony Bellavia, was there to welcome students and local business leaders, and offer

encouragement to NIC students looking for employment opportunities. A massive thanks to Anita for making all the arrangements.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Bachelor of Science in Nursing Scholarship Day

Submitted by Heidi Deagle, Instructor, Bachelor of Science in Nursing

On November 12, 2025, Year 4 students in NIC's Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) Program hosted the annual Scholarship Day at the Courtenay Campus. This event provided attendees an opportunity to view the scholarly work of BSN students, and to participate in meaningful dialogue on important and interesting topics related to healthcare, nursing education, and patient experiences. Students presented their research questions and systematic inquiry results with professional conference-style posters and engaged in dialogue directly with attendees. Topics included imposter phenomenon, gamification & application of technology in nursing education, engaging with rural Indigenous communities to advance health equity, and use of virtual reality for skill development. Scholarship Day highlights the vital role of research and evidence-based practice in nursing. This event also brings attention to the scholarly contributions of BSN students related to current critical issues and fosters community building among BSN student cohorts.

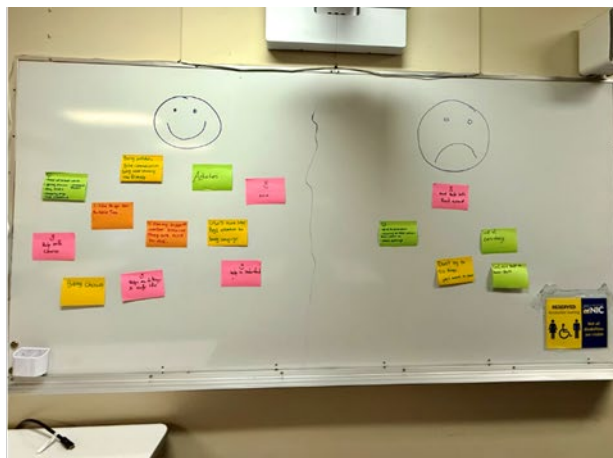


Fostering Person-Centered Support Through Student Collaboration

Submitted by Amanda Pope, Instructor, Human Services

The Human Services (HSW) students recently welcomed the Accessible Education and Training (AET) students into their HSW 164 class for a collaborative learning event focused on building

understanding and empathy in support roles. During the session, the AET students served as mentors, sharing their personal experiences to help future community support workers and education assistants understand what truly makes a difference in providing quality support. They highlighted the characteristics of effective and compassionate support professionals, while also offering valuable insights through stories about less helpful experiences. The event provided an authentic and meaningful exchange, strengthening the Human Services students' awareness of how to provide respectful, person-centered support.



Strengthening Community Partnerships, Culture, and Justice

Submitted by Kerri Lowey MacKenzie, Instructor, Human Services

The Human Services Department continues to build strong community ties by welcoming agencies such as AVI, Island Health Mental Health and Substance Use, Comox Valley and Campbell River Transition Society, Comox Valley Family Services, the Community Justice Centre, local school districts, and our Elders in Residence. We are also reaching out to community partners and adding agencies as possible placement options, as the department grows, while managing overlaps between programs.

Advancing Indigenization and Intercultural Competence

In the coming months, program leads will host Truth and Reconciliation Ceremonies for five student cohorts. Students will receive a booklet featuring the 94 Calls to Action to deepen their understanding and commitment to reconciliation.

We recently held a Program Advisory Committee meeting focused on intercultural competence and supporting students in community-based practicums, featuring guest speaker, Margaret Hearnden.

Provincial Collaboration

In November, Kerri Lowey MacKenzie will attend the FPSE Human Rights and International Solidarity Meeting, collaborating with colleges and universities across B.C. to advance human rights locally and globally.

Professional Development

Both Meredith McEvoy and Kerri Lowey MacKenzie were awarded Common PD funds for projects centered on Indigenous and intercultural themes:

- Meredith's project focuses on place-based learning and connections in Kyuquot.

- Kerri's project aims to develop cross-cultural competency and expand international understanding of indigenization and restorative justice through a visit to NIC's partner institution, Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi in New Zealand (June 2026).

Promoting Justice and Inclusive Dialogue

The department continues to support the Comox Valley Community Justice Centre and is raising awareness about upcoming Circles for Dialogue in November and December, fostering safe and inclusive conversations within our communities.

NIC Planetary Health Symposium – Ocean and Human Health

Submitted by Maddison Paetz, Instructor, Bachelor of Science in Nursing



Maddison Paetz is organizing an in-person Planetary Health Symposium, hosted by the BSN program on October 6, 2026, in recognition of the National Day of Action on Planetary Health. The inaugural theme, Ocean and Human Health, highlights the deep connection between ocean health and human well-being—making ocean protection both an environmental and public health priority. Inspired by the UN Decade of Ocean Science (2021–2030) and aligned with CNA and CANE's Planetary Health Position Statement, the symposium aims to unite diverse voices, bridge disciplines, and move beyond awareness toward community-led action.

Nursing students will engage in this evidence-based, relational event, experiencing firsthand how the planet—especially the ocean—is framed as our collective patient.

TRADES AND TECHNICAL PROGRAMS

And just like that...2025 is nothing but the taillights. Most of the fall programming for Trades and Technical wrapped right before the college closure for the holidays with the exception of Foundation programs, a Heavy Mechanical Level 2 and two Electrical Apprenticeships, Levels 2 and 4.

Trades and Technical Programming Winter 2026

The picture for 2026 is worth a thousand words. If we could give you a visual of what is coming in our department we are not sure 1000 words would do the trick. SkilledTradesBC Standard Level Exams have started back up across all apprenticeships with five taking place in January alone. There will be many more to come from February to June.

At the Comox Valley campus there are six Carpentry Apprenticeships and one Foundation program as well as three Plumbing Apprenticeships and a Foundation: with both of the Foundation programs running into the summer months. Port Alberni is carrying over their Automotive, Joinery and Welding Foundation programs with the Auto ending in April and Joinery and Welding concluding in May. The

Professional Cook Level 1 cohort with Chef Jonathan Frazer already has 14 eager students signed up with possibly more students joining the program once their registration process is completed. The Trades wings at the Campbell River campus are humming right along. Heavy Mechanical, Welding and Automotive programs have the E-wing corridors in constant motion. We have five Heavy Mechanical Apprenticeships across levels 1 – 4 including Heavy Mechanical Foundation, with instructor Kyle Ward, which will run from February to October. The fall Welding programs will end in May but for the duration will share the shop booths with the new winter Welding cohorts in Foundation and Apprenticeships under Karl Plautz. Automotive Foundation will end in early April and will be the only empty shop in E-wing until the Fall.

Let's move over to D-wing where things are far from static. David Apperson's Electrical Foundation students will be finishing their program February 20th and David has been working hard to set students up for success scheduling Work Experience at several local businesses where students will get a better idea of what will be expected of them when they transition from school to industry. As one Electrical foundation wraps up two more are on the books for the winter – summer terms. Additionally, there are five Electrical Apprenticeships. Demand for Level 2 is extremely high warranting 3 separate cohorts in addition to a Level 3 and Level 4.

The Coastal Forest Certificate students finished their program in December while the Technology Diploma students (second year) carried on and will be graduating in April. The Instrumentation and Electrical Automation students will be finishing up the second year of their program at the end of May and instructor, Cory Batch, has invited several Industry representatives to visit his classroom and students, not only to view how students are progressing and the scope of training they are receiving at NIC, but to discuss the many exciting opportunities available to them either in continued studies or employment prospects.

The Trade Sampler program has not waived in its popularity and remains high in demand for individuals who wish to pursue a career in the Trades Industry but have not yet decided which trade is most compatible to individual interests. The 2026 winter term will offer two intakes of the Trade Sampler program accommodating 16 students per cohort – both of which are full with waitlists. What is on the agenda? Carpentry/Cabinetmaking, Automotive, Heavy-Duty Mechanical, Plumbing, Electrical and Welding. Students will also learn proactive team and workplace skills which are essential competencies that prepare learners to meet the demands for entry into the workforce.

Trades enrolments are stable and at some of the highest levels they've been at over the past 5 years, with further growth on the horizon...

Exciting News!

Investing in Trades: New Provincial Funding Benefits Students and the Regional Economy

In November 2025, the Government of British Columbia announced a landmark \$241-million investment to double skilled trades training funding over the next three years. This is the largest increase in nearly two decades. The Trades Department is very excited about this investment, which will expand access to apprenticeship training, reduce waitlists, and create more timely pathways for students into well-paying, in-demand careers. By strengthening partnerships with industry and post-secondary institutions, the investment will help ensure students are trained locally for jobs that support major projects and community infrastructure. This increased training

capacity is expected to have a positive ripple effect across the regional economy by supporting employers, retaining skilled workers, and helping communities benefit directly from economic growth driven by construction, clean energy, and resource sectors.

Time is marching on and the unmistakable appearance of the coming winter is marked by the autumn leaves clinging defiantly to the branches of the deciduous trees going dormant as the seasons change once again. Keeping pace, Trades and Technical programs are also in step with many of our Fall apprenticeship programs concluding as more fall in line for incoming students at all levels.

Apprenticeships ending in October: Carpentry levels 2, 3 & 4 Plumbing level 1 Heavy Duty Equipment Technician Level 2	Apprenticeships starting in October: Carpentry levels 1, 2 & 4 Plumbing levels 1 & 2
Ending in November: Electrical Apprenticeship levels 1, 3 & 4 Heavy Duty Equipment Technician level 1	November starts: Professional Cook 3 Heavy Duty levels 2 & 3 Electrical Apprentice levels 4 & 2 (Dec 1) Scheduled Welding Apprenticeships levels 1, 2, 3 & B

Several of the November startups will run into the New Year while others wind down right before the holidays in December.

Of note, due to the BCGEU job action in October and November, the SkilledTradesBC Standard Level Exams were waived due to uncertainty surrounding printing and timely delivery of exam packages. Red Seal exams, however, were not exempt and took place as usual.

In the meantime....

Institution to Industry Connection

Trades and Technical Programs are committed to strengthening industry partnerships to gain deeper insights into market demands and employer expectations. We actively seek feedback and recommendations to continuously enhance program delivery, ensuring our students are well-prepared to meet or exceed these standards.

As such, we will be hosting Program Advisory Committee meetings consisting of representatives in Industry, local businesses, SkilledTradesBC, the Dean, Trades and Technical Coordinator, and our NIC instructors.

On October 30th, a Program Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting was held for our Welding programs, featuring not only the previously mentioned representatives but also participants from the Department of National Defense and Seaspan of the Victoria Shipyards. Below, Mike Androschuk, Trades and Technical Programs' Coordinator details what is involved in the process.

Prior to our PAC meetings, participants are provided agendas and three questions. These questions are always sent out in advance of the evening so our meeting can have value, purpose, structure and direction - staying on topic and maximizing our participants incredibly valuable time.

This year's questions:

- *What trends are you noticing in your apprenticeships, and what changes or improvements would you like to see moving forward?*
- *What new technologies are you seeing in the field that the PAC should be aware of?*
- *What Challenges are you currently facing in your business, and what skills or competencies do you anticipate needing in the next 1-3 years?*

The Welding Program Advisory Committee met at the Campbell River campus, beginning with an engaging in-shop demonstration of the new Venture 150s battery-powered welder from Miller Electric. This hands-on presentation provided a dynamic start to the evening and offered members a direct look at emerging technologies influencing industry practice.

The subsequent roundtable in the boardroom was highly positive and collaborative, with participants offering clear, tangible feedback on current workforce needs and emerging challenges.

Two themes stood out:

- *The strong regional demand for qualified metal fabricators*
- *The ongoing impact of CWB certification requirements on graduate employability.*

Committee members shared real-world perspectives that underscored both the urgency and the opportunity in these areas.

Overall, the evening reflected exceptional industry engagement. Their thoughtful contributions provided NIC with valuable directions to research, and we can now consider future actions that will continue to strengthen program relevance and support student success. Trades and Technical Programs plan to explore these options with a clear and concise list of action items that came from the highly productive evening.

December 3rd

We will be hosting a PAC for our Heavy Duty Equipment Technician apprenticeship programs and the Heavy Mechanical Foundation program. Invitations have gone out and the response has been enthusiastic. We expect to have a very engaging and constructive discussion with valuable insights and positive outcomes.

Seaweed Micro-Credential Program Wrap-Up

The Seaweed Micro-Credential Program was delivered fully online with flexible scheduling, increasing access for learners in rural and coastal communities who often face barriers to post-secondary education.

A highlight of the program was two applied learning weeks, which allowed students to connect theory with hands-on experience and cultural knowledge:

- **Port Hardy (Míxalakwila Campus):** 19 students worked with Kwakiutl First Nation to learn the cultural significance of seaweed and observe traditional harvesting practices.
- **West Coast (Tofino/Ucluelet):** 18 students partnered with Naas Foods and Indigenous knowledge keepers from Ahousaht and Toquaht First Nations to explore sustainable harvesting and ecological restoration efforts.

Students engaged in a wide range of practical activities, including:

- Knot tying and kelp spooling
- Building a mock kelp farm
- Gathering bull kelp reproductive tissue and preparing a spore release
- Using microscopes to study sori tissue
- Laying shoreline transects to analyze species distribution
- Assembling aquaria and testing seaweed-based products

Collaboration with regional producers, processors, and NIC's Seaweed Innovation Lab enriched the program's relevance and credibility. Guest speakers and site visits provided valuable networking opportunities and strengthened connections to local industry needs. Informal feedback from students highlighted increased confidence and skill application.

These experiences demonstrated the potential for advancing sustainable economic opportunities through seaweed production in remote coastal communities while integrating cultural knowledge and ecological stewardship

