

BCIT UPDATE

YOUR CAMPUS BULLETIN

JANUARY 11, 1988

PARK COMMISSION REPORT THE INSTITUTE RESPONDS

Expressions of relief, disappointment and confusion were all voiced on campus at the release of the Park Commission report just before Christmas. In a news release issued December 9, the Ministry of Advanced Education and Job Training showed its acceptance of the report with the following key statement:

"Primarily because of the widespread public expression of confidence in the Institute, the Minister said he was prepared to search for other means of providing the province with advanced technical training, leaving BCIT free to concentrate on its primary strength — the two-year diploma in business, health and engineering."

The news release also included the following critical point from the report:

"The province does need advanced technical training — but BCIT is not the appropriate vehicle for such an ambitious project."

President Murray immediately shared the executive summary of the report with all staff and in a personal message expressed disappointment that BCIT would not be selected as the province's new high technology training institution. Other members of the Institute community have also expressed concern, among them Michael Scriabin whose ARCS Lab epitomizes the kind of applied research and technology transfer activity that puts BCIT in such a unique position in the province today. His letter to Minister of Advanced Education and Job Training, Stanley Hagen, together with another one from Staff Society president, Mark Angelo, are reprinted here in full:

From: Michael Scriabin, Ph.D, Head, ARCS Laboratory
To: Hon. Stanley Hagen, Minister of Advanced Education and Job Training

Dear Mr. Hagen:

I am sending you this letter because you and many of your staff and associates have visited ARCS Lab, and are aware of the genuine interest its members have in the development and transfer of first class technology between BCIT and British Columbia industry.

In particular, I am concerned by certain inappropriate conclusions which have been drawn by the Park commission in their recent task force report concerning BCIT, despite an obviously huge and commendable effort at gathering facts.

The inappropriate conclusions are those concerned with the Centre for

Applied Technology, and the College of Advanced Technology.

In the comments I present below, I shall show that, using the same information provided in the report, the inescapable conclusion should be to locate and support both the proposed Centre for Applied Technology and the proposed College of Advanced Technology at BCIT.

CENTRE FOR APPLIED TECHNOLOGY

In point 17 of the summary, the Task Force Report supports, "an increasing role in applied research" for BCIT. However in point 18 the Park commission unfairly sets up a straw man:

"In our view this development . . . brings to mind images of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the California Institute of Technology."

So says the report, referring to the proposed Centre for Applied Technology. The report then attempts to shoot down the proposed Centre by claiming that BCIT "is a very long way from these institutions . . ." In fact, it only shoots down the irrelevant and inappropriate "images" of BCIT as MIT or Caltech,

OPEN HOUSE

BCIT will hold an Open House for the community on April 8, 9 and 10. The venture is being jointly undertaken by the Student Association, represented by coordinator Lori Plamondon, and the Institute, represented by Community and Media Relations director, Carol Dion.

apparently formed in the minds of the task force members.

In point 20, the report lists as "impediments" to the "remaking of BCIT into the desired vision" BCIT's "collective agreements with faculty and staff, its physical plant, and the need for ongoing close relationships with trades training."

Let's tackle these "impediments" in turn.

First, the current collective agreement does not limit the administration as to the qualifications it requires for any particular position. The pay scales will certainly not be too high for the kind of personnel one would seek for either a Centre for Applied Technology or a College of Advanced Technology, and any supposed instances of employees taking advantage of provisions in the agreement by, for instance, working to rule, are hard to imagine occurring in the case of staff involved in research and innovation. Personnel directly

involved in research and innovation, especially of an applied nature, tend to put in far more work than is required of them by their employment contracts.

Second, BCIT's physical plant is not an impediment, it is an asset. Already a nucleus of the Centre for Applied Technology exists at BCIT, e.g. the Development Assistance Centre, ARCS Lab and the IBEW project. Further, a Discovery Park is located very close to BCIT, presumably for the very purpose of fostering joint projects with industry. Before accepting the task force's judgement that BCIT's physical plant is an impediment, I'd like to hear qualified engineers' and architects' opinions on the relative costs of establishing a small college, with all the support staff and equipment required for joint ventures with industry, at BCIT and, as suggested in the report, on a separate new campus.

Finally, the arguments supporting the "need for ongoing close relationships with trades training," apply also to the need for ongoing close relationships with advanced technology and applied research. The report recognizes that

" . . . the Institute can play an increasing role in applied research and in the transfer of relevant technology to business, industry and the workforce in British Columbia. This has been demonstrated by such developments as the ARCS laboratory, the IBEW-funded electrical/electronics project, and others."

One of the greatest strengths of ARCS Laboratory lies in the close ties between the research personnel and the technology training function. Based on past experience as consultant in industry, as Associate Professor at the University of Waterloo and Simon Fraser University, as instructor and administrator in a BCIT Technology, and as Head of ARCS Lab, I can state unequivocally that the kind of results being achieved in ARCS Lab could not be achieved in an environment which excludes the source of specialized skill available to the Laboratory through the technology training function of BCIT.

It is only faintly reassuring to see in points 30 and 41 that the report recognizes that "A similar smaller centre (for applied technology) would still be a worthwhile adjunct to BCIT . . ."

COLLEGE OF ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY

Regarding the concept of a College of Advanced Technology, the report supports its establishment in points 22

continued over

to 33, but then suggests in one short sentence in point 29 that it should probably be physically separate from any existing institution, and free from the impediments which are present in the existing institutions." That sentence contains the only (and clearly inadequate) justification in the report for establishing the College away from BCIT. Except for that one damning sentence in point 29, I see no conflict between the establishment of a college of Advanced Technology as a small elite centre at BCIT, and points 22 to 33 of the summary, or section 16 of the report.

In point 28, the report states the College of Advanced Technology would "not be another university, but an institution in the polytechnic model," and in point 19: "BCIT is fulfilling its mandate as an institution of the polytechnic type . . ."

The "impediments" have already been discussed under the Centre for Applied Technology, above.

DEGREE GRANTING

In points 34 to 36, the report presents persuasive arguments against degree granting. I concur.

The granting of degrees is widely regarded as a university function and, since at least initially only lower level degrees would be granted by the proposed College of Advanced Technology, degree granting would conjure up the image of a low level university rather than a College of Advanced Technology.

For the same reason, I disagree strongly with the report's statement in point 27 that "Clearly such an institution would be degree granting to at least the baccalaureate level . . ." Surely it would be more appropriate, and at the same time consistent with technology training, to award some form of diploma of advanced technology, rather than making inappropriate and misleading use of university terminology.

SUMMARY

While the Park commission has amassed and included in its report many valuable facts gathered in the course of its investigation, some unsupported opinions and mental images have also found their way into the report. Although few of the report's conclusions have been based on these opinions and mental images, they could have a significant impact if acted upon. Conclusions, and especially decisions, should be based on careful logical analysis of the facts.

For the reasons stated in the body of this letter, both the Centre for Applied Technology and the College of Advanced Technology should be located at BCIT. It would in fact be counterproductive to locate these functions in a small institution isolated from BCIT's industry-oriented training programs. The College of Advanced Technology should grant Diplomas in Advanced Technology, not degrees.

These conclusions are entirely consistent with the facts presented by the David Park Commission in the Task Report on the British Columbia Institute of Technology.

cc.: Honourable William N. Vander Zalm, Premier; Isabel Kelly, Deputy

Minister of Advanced Education and Job Training; John A. Watson, Assistant Deputy Minister, Universities, Colleges and Institutes, Ministry of Advanced Education and Job Training; Ron Woodward, Assistant Deputy Minister, Science, Technology and Job Training, Ministry of Advanced Education and Job Training; David Park, Western Management Consultants; Roy Murray, President, BCIT; Drug Svetic, Vice-President Academic, BCIT; Ernie Iannaccone, Executive Director, Development Assistance Centre; Ron Sterne, Dean, School of Engineering Technologies and Trades; Morven Wilson, Director, Centre for Information Technology, BCIT.

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From: Mark Angelo, President, BCIT Staff Society

To: Hon. Stanley Hagen, Minister of Advanced Education and Job Training

Dear Mr. Hagen:

Thank you for meeting with us on December 9 to discuss the Park Report. I have since had time to analyze it and I do have some concerns relating to BCIT's future mandate. Given our past experience, I'm also concerned as to how the Institute will be affected by Formula Funding.

In addition, I'd be interested in talking to you about the possibility of an early retirement window for our members. We have an excellent group of faculty but a relatively high percentage within 5 - 10 years of retirement. They would in all likelihood react favourably to any incentive program.

If your schedule permits, myself and some of our Executive would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you in Victoria sometime in the new year.

cc. Roy Murray

JAPANESE VISITORS INTERESTED IN BCIT'S COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY

At the request of the Burnaby Mayor's office, four businessmen from Burnaby's sister city of Kushiro in Japan visited BCIT on Tuesday, December 15.

Yasushi Watanabe of Kushiro Junior College, Shouzo Seido of the HCC (High Technology, Computer and Communications) Corporation, and Kohji Abe and Toshio Suga of the Mass Corporation spent about two hours looking at computer projects in ARCS Lab and Computer Based Education.

BCIT UPDATE

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STAFF NEWS

Marilyn Duggan, manager, Compensation and Benefits, resigned from the Institute effective December 11. She had worked in Personnel/Employee Relations since May, 1985.

Labour relations manager, Jose Stockdale, who has been on sick leave since November 23, is due back in mid-February.

Personnel manager, Michael Stepler, was presented with the BCIT Alumni Award for Career Achievement during the Board of Governors meeting in December. Michael started his career as a student, graduating from BCIT's Building Technology in 1975. After two years of working outside the Institute he came back in 1977 as a member of the Building faculty. He served as president of the BCIT Staff Society from June, 1985 to February, 1987 and as a director-at-large from 1983 to 1985. In March, 1987 Michael made a career switch when he became personnel manager in BCIT's Personnel/Employee Relations Department.

Personnel coordinator Maureen Madigan, on leave of absence from Personnel since June, 1987, is due back early in July.

Sandie Mooney has been appointed secretary to the Student Services Department. Her new responsibilities include supervision of the clerical and reception functions in the Student Services area in Building 1A.

Congratulations to Lexie Leeson and husband Dave on the birth of their 4309.20 grams (9 lb. 8 oz.) daughter, Jessica Nicole, on December 10. Lexie is secretary to Barney Morrow, associate dean of Administrative systems in the School of Business.

FAX UNIT INSTALLED AT BCIT

Need approval of a document or letter in a hurry? BCIT now has a permanent FAX unit in the administration building that can reach other FAX users anywhere in the world. Whether it's a photograph, a ten-page report, or a two-line message you want to send — resident specialist, Carol Glover will be happy to assist you.

"Make sure you have the receiving FAX number when you come to use the FAX machine," says Carol. "Although we have FAX directories for all the provincial government ministries, it's necessary to have the receiving FAX number on hand."

There is no charge for sending FAX messages within this telephone area, but normal long distance rates apply to those locations outside our no-charge calling area. A special feature of the equipment, however, is its ability to delay sending which allows for transmission during off hours when rates are less expensive. If you need to send a message or document quickly by long distance, please bring your cost centre number.

If you have any questions or would like to send a message, contact either Phyllis Johnson at local 8529 or Carol Glover at local 8675.