

BCIT UPDATE

SPECIAL EDITION

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BCIT BACK ON TRACK AFTER SURPRISE MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENT

BCIT staff and students were jubilant today as President Roy Murray officially announced the government's decision to restore \$2.6m in funding to the 1988/89 budget and establish BCIT as the Centre for Advanced Technology Training in the province.

In a packed gymnasium, surrounded by television cameras, he said:

"Since 1973 this institution has been the subject of more than 20 internal and external studies. The Price Waterhouse Study and the Park Report were the latest in a long list that has looked at everything from costs and productivity to degree status.

"The time for these studies to stop and for the institution to receive a clear mandate and the necessary financial support to carry out that mandate is long overdue.

"I am pleased to tell you that the time has come. At 11:30 a.m. today, the Minister of Advanced Education and Job Training released the following statement:"

VICTORIA — The Provincial Government today laid out a new mandate for the B.C. Institute of Technology.

Effective fiscal year 1989/90, the Institute will become the Centre for Advanced Technology Training in the province.

Hagen said Dr. Jack Newberry, Director of Programs Division in his Ministry, will head a team to direct and work with BCIT's administration during the transition.

The Minister said in order for BCIT to lay the framework for the 1989/90 budget year, and to get ready to operate as a Centre for Advanced Technology Training, the government is prepared to restore \$2.6 million in funding to the BCIT budget.

BCIT will also receive an additional two per cent funding — less \$726,000 identified by BCIT in administrative savings — for this fiscal year.

Hagen said the restoration of funding means BCIT's budget for 1988/89 will be \$52,833,000.

The decision to create a Centre for Advanced Technology Training is one the government has been considering for some time.

"Our government has long recognized the need for a facility that can serve as a flagship in providing advanced technical training in the province," the Minister said.

"We had hoped that BCIT would serve in this capacity, but over the years, we saw the institute move towards a kind of operation that was very similar to those which exist in our college system.

Hagen said the government proposed in the fall of 1987 that BCIT take steps to re-vamp its operations to emphasize advanced technology.

However, BCIT did not respond to this initiative.

"The budget cuts implemented at BCIT reflected the fact that BCIT's operations continued to be very much like a number of other colleges in the system."

Hagen noted that a recommendation to establish a Centre for Advanced Technology Training was made last December in a task force report on BCIT.

"While the report suggested a locale other than BCIT, I and officials in my Ministry believe that BCIT is best-equipped to fill this role.

"Through a team approach, we can ensure that the new centre will fulfill its mandate — and become a centre of excellence that will produce well-trained graduates in a whole range of high-technology occupations," Hagen said.

Hagen said he is confident that the BCIT board will meet the government's requirements and will work closely with the Ministry implementation team to bring about its changed mandate.

"I expect Dr. Newberry and the administration at BCIT to sit down immediately to get this project underway," the Minister said.

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Murray said he was pleased that BCIT's role as an institution separate from the colleges had been recognized, and reiterated the following distinctions:

"We have a provincial mandate.

More than 50% of our programs are not offered at other institutions.

Our programs are lab and capital equipment intensive.

We require more capital facilities to offer these programs."

"I am pleased Dr. Newberry has been appointed to work with our administration as we make the transition to our new status as the centre for advanced technology training," he added.

Murray concluded by thanking BCIT students and staff for handling the budget crisis in a professional manner. He also thanked business, industry, the news media and general public for their support.

After listening to comments by Staff Society president Mark Angelo, Vancouver city alderman, Carole Taylor, BCGEU president, John Shields, Tower Group chairman, Peter Crowder and Student Association president Jamie Letwin, Murray left for Victoria.

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