

NEWS RELEASE
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NIC and PCU-WHS Offer New Degree Pathway for Human Services Students

Graduates of NIC Human Services programs have new opportunities to complete a degree at Pacific Coast University for Workplace Health Sciences, thanks to a new agreement signed this fall between the two institutions.

The block transfer agreement provides NIC Human Services and Social Services graduates up to 45 transfer credits in the University's Bachelor of Disability Management degree.

"This agreement establishes a new career track for NIC students," said NIC President John Bowman, "Students who had planned on working as an education assistant in schools, or in the social services field, can now complete their NIC program and move into a very specialized career."

The four-year applied degree prepares graduates to enter the growing field of disability management – either helping under-employed workers directly, or, assisting employers, insurers and service organizations as they introduce cost-effective and responsive disability management and return-to-work programs. Designed as an online program, the degree offers students the flexibility to study on their own schedules.



New degree pathways for NIC Human Services Students: NIC President John Bowman and Vice President Learning and Students Lisa Domae sign a block transfer agreement with PCU-WHS President Wolfgang Zimmermann and Joyce Gravelle, Vice President Administration.

There is an ever-increasing need for individuals with education and experience in the disability management and return-to-work fields due to an aging workforce, increased awareness of mental health challenges and the development of national and provincial accessibility legislation. In 2010, Canada ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which includes a requirement for all employers to have effective return to work programs in place.

"Increasing the number of highly skilled individuals in the return to work or disability management arena as job opportunities emerge, changes the narrative for persons with disabilities," said Wolfgang Zimmermann, President, Pacific Coast University for Workplace Health Sciences. "With almost 1.2 million Canadians with a disability living in poverty, maintaining gainful and productive employment following the onset of a disabling condition is key towards continued full financial and social participation."

Established in 1975, North Island College is a publically funded post-secondary institution serving 157,000 people across 80,000 km² on central and northern Vancouver Island and the BC mainland coast. It is distinguished by its commitment to student success through strong partnership agreements with universities and colleges across BC, Canada and around the world. It proudly serves more than 8,000 students annually who rely on NIC for individual courses and high-quality certificate, diploma and degree programs in upgrading, health and human services, business, tourism, fine art and design, university studies, as well as trades and technology programs.

Pacific Coast University for Workplace Health Sciences is a statutory, not-for-profit, degree-granting university, founded and supported by the National Institute of Disability Management and Research (NIDMAR) for the special purpose of creating and disseminating new knowledge including applied research in the fields of workplace safety, health promotion, return to work and disability management, comprehensive rehabilitation and disability leadership studies.

For more information on the Bachelor of Disability Management degree, visit <https://www.pcu-whs.ca/programs/> or for information on NIC's Health and Human Services programs visit www.nic.bc.ca/communitycare.

Media contacts:

Christiana Wiens,
Media Liaison, North Island College
Christiana.wiens@nic.bc.ca
250-334-5280

Public Relations
Pacific Coast University for Workplace Health Sciences
info@pcu-whs.ca