



## PCU-WHS adds diverse expertise to its Board of Governors

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**Lance R. Blanco**



**Shanna Ramm**

Pacific Coast University for Workplace Health Sciences (PCU-WHS) has deepened its pool of expertise and added fresh perspectives with two new appointments to its Board of Governors. Senior Vice President Corporate Development Lance R. Blanco of Hardwoods Distribution Inc. and Senior Disability and Wellness Specialist Shanna Ramm of The Mosaic Company have joined the Board, effective immediately.

PCU-WHS President Wolfgang Zimmermann welcomes their involvement. “We are extremely pleased that both Shanna and Lance have agreed to join the Board of Governors and contribute to our drive for continuous innovation, thought leadership, and best practice outcomes in education and research.”

### Forest industry experience spans decades

Lance Blanco holds a BA Honours in Business Administration from Simon Fraser University and completed two years’ graduate studies, Master of Science in Labour Relations at the University of British Columbia. He spent 25 years in the forest industry holding various leadership positions with MacMillan Bloedel, including three years overseas at a subsidiary office in Japan. He served as Vice President Enterprise Supply Chain Management with Weyerhaeuser Company in Tacoma, WA, and in Vancouver as President and CEO of Hardwoods Distribution Inc.

In 2014, Mr. Blanco sustained a spinal cord injury in a mountain biking accident and now uses a manual wheelchair. He has since modified his role at Hardwoods Distribution where, as Senior Vice President Corporate Development, he continues to be instrumental in the company’s success, overseeing its growth to 66 branches with 1,300 employees and \$1.2 billion in annual sales.

To the PCU-WHS Board of Governors he brings a depth of experience in strategic planning, management, and marketing. He explains, “My goal is to help the University continue to grow and expand its services. I bring a skill set in operational management that includes a strong safety view, combined with my own personal experience in sustaining a spinal cord injury.”

Mr. Zimmermann adds, “Lance, as a long-time experienced senior executive in Canada’s forest industry, but also as an individual who has had to face significant adjustments following a more recent life-changing accident, brings unique perspectives, knowledge, and strengths as we build a foundation that will enable the University to evolve into a national and international leader in workplace health science.”

### First student representative joins the Board

Shanna Ramm, CPHR, holds a BA with a major in psychology from the University of Saskatchewan and graduated with distinction from Saskatchewan Polytechnic with an Advanced Certificate in Human Resources Management; she holds the designation Chartered Professional in Human Resources (CPHR).

She is currently completing her fourth year of the Bachelor of Disability Management degree program at PCU-WHS, achieving a 4.0 GPS.

Concurrently, in her role at The Mosaic Company in Saskatchewan, she is part of an internal team that delivered the company’s first return to work and disability



management program. Recently, she has been involved in a two-year psychological wellness pilot being rolled out to the company's largest site this year.

Ms. Ramm is excited about the opportunity to provide input to the Board. "I've gained so much from the classes at the University. I use the content almost daily in my job. When I see how my company has benefited from my education, I want that for others."

She adds, "As a student representative, I want to learn from the others on the Board as well as contribute my perspective on how the University will, hopefully, have its presence grow across Canada. I'm passionate about that."

Mr. Zimmermann welcomes her insider's view of the University. "Shanna is the first student representative on the University's Board of Governors and she is also someone working on the front line of return to work for a major Canadian corporation, so she brings her own diverse, multi-faceted perspective to the table."

He concludes that "There is an increasing emphasis on better return-to-work outcomes across many public and private sector workplaces today, recognizing that more than 80 percent of all mental and physical health impairments occur during someone's working life. Our Board is committed to making return to work part of the recovery process in tandem with all other facets of the workplace health spectrum."

## **Current Initiatives – Providing Education and Career Opportunities**

**Scholarship Opportunity** – WorkSafeBC and PCU-WHS have joined in offering a unique scholarship program providing students to transfer into the Bachelor of Disability Management degree program after completing relevant educational prerequisites. Details available on the website at:  
<https://www.pcu-whs.ca/programs/bdm/worksafebc-pcu-whs-scholarship-pilot-project/>

**Veterans Affairs** has teamed up with PCU-WHS to provide Veterans and DND personnel to participate in the online continuing education Disability Management Practitioner Program at no cost to participants, providing personnel an opportunity to transition into this expanding career field. Full details available on the website at:  
<https://www.pcu-whs.ca/programs/continuing-professional-education/dmpc-program/veterans-affairs-initiative/>

## **About PCU-WHS**

Pacific Coast University for Workplace Health Sciences (PCU-WHS) is a statutory not-for-profit, post-secondary, degree granting education and research institution 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. It is committed to excellence in teaching and research, scholarship and service to the broader community.

The primary values inherent in this University are a strong commitment to a safer work environment and the integration of disabled workers into the workforce through advanced education and research knowledge.

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