

Degrees granted at college

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THE first graduates of Capilano College's new bachelor degree programs celebrated a new milestone for the college with cap and gown this week.

Sixteen students became the college's first graduating class with newly-minted bachelor degrees at spring convocation on May 21.

The ceremony came after a provincial announcement May 16, giving the college authority to grant four applied degrees.

Capilano College is the first college in the province to receive degree-granting status since the provincial government passed new legislation expanding degree-granting authority.

While the college has offered baccalaureate degrees for more than a decade in partnership with B.C.'s Open University, the latest move means the college now offers degrees in business administration, tourism management, jazz studies and music therapy in its own name.

Capilano College president Greg Lee called the move a great step forward for the institution.

He said the new bachelor degrees reflect

the high quality of education students receive at the college.

Gary Johnston, member of Squamish Nation and owner of an eco-tourism business, was part of the first graduating class this week.

"It's quite a nice feeling of accomplishment," he said.

Johnston earned a diploma in tourism management from the college in the early 1990s.

"At the time that's all there was," said Johnston.

Later on, he worked in tourism for the provincial government and started up his own company, Sea Wolf Adventures.

When Johnston heard about the new degree program, he decided it would be a smart move.

Johnston completed part of his program by attending classes at night while working during the day.

That's one of the benefits of a college degree program, said college spokesperson Shelley Kean.

Kean noted it's flexible and very accessible to students. The college hopes to expand its degree programs in the future, she added.

This year is the college's 35th anniversary. A total of 7,200 students take credit courses at the college. An additional 7,000 students take non-credit courses annually.

