

NEW PROGRAM AT CAP FOR NATIVE STUDENTS

There's a new program on campus at Capilano College this fall, and although its nerve centre is in a small room tucked away amidst the classrooms of the North Campus, that program is already a vital part of college life.

The College Achievement and Support Program (CASP)--modelled on a successful program at Fraser Valley College--is a one year program aimed at preparing Native students for university. As well, CASP will make the Native presence felt through programs and events offered for the entire college community. A Native lecture series, a Native Indian film festival, and a Northwest Coast art exhibit are all now in the planning stages.

CASP is funded by the Department of Indian Affairs in cooperation with the Squamish, Burrard, Sechelt, Mount Currie, and Anderson Lake Indian Bands. Students take a number of specially designed core courses in college study and survival skills, and also enroll in some regular academic or career classes. In the spring, a career planning segment will give the students the opportunity to explore different career directions, and at the end of the one-year program students will receive a certificate.

"We're excited about the program," said Coordinator Terry Hood. "It's off to a great start. We've been encouraged by the initial response to the program and the enthusiasm of the faculty, staff and administration."

CASP is designed both for recent high school graduates and for mature Native students who are interested in returning for post-secondary education. Although the program was not extensively advertised, there were thirty applications for the twenty-five positions available this fall.

CASP's Coordinator comes to Capilano with an impressive background. For six years Terry Hood was a coordinator for the Native Indian Teacher

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Education Program at UBC, and his other experience includes two years as head of the alternate school run by the Squamish Indian Band and North Vancouver School District, a stint with SFU's Native Teacher Education program in Mount Currie, and involvement with the United Native Nations.

Hood estimates that last year at Capilano College there were six or seven Native students in attendance. This year, including the 25 in CASP, he estimates that there are about thirty-eight.

"I feel that this is a significant step," said Hood. "Capilano College and the local Native community are both ready for this program. CASP is an idea whose time has come."

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This logo for the College Achievement and Support Program (CASP) at Capilano College was designed by Ben Pierre, a 16 year old native high school student from Sechelt. His was the winning design in a logo contest for the new program, which prepares native Indian students for university.

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