

## viewpoint

Published by North Shore News a division of Carwest Publishing Inc.

# Change by degrees

**N**ORTH Shore residents — and in fact British Columbians as a whole — should watch with interest the changes that will soon be taking place at Capilano College in the wake of its upgrade this week to university status.

What exactly that means has yet to be determined, but the outcome will have significant ramifications for education in British Columbia.

In the past, Capilano College has filled the role traditionally played by other institutions of that designation: equipping students to enter professions or preparing them to enrol in university. But in recent years, that roll has been blurring, with the college offering an increasing number of degree programs, primarily oriented toward professional training. By all accounts they have been popular and of a high calibre.

With its redesignation as a university — a testament to its quality as an institution — that roll will undoubtedly continue to grow. But until we know the outcome of that evolution, some very important questions will remain unanswered: Will the upgrade change what it means to go to Capilano, or will it change what it means to go to university? Will it do both? And which is preferable?

There is no question that post-secondary education will continue to be an ever-more-vital tool for young people entering the workforce. That fact only underscores how important this change is to those moving through the system.

Capilano College's evolution must be negotiated with great care and great attention. The future of our province's youth depends on it.

# Change may boost enrolment

*From page 1*

variety of areas including business, tourism, jazz studies and music therapy, and it had another eight in the works. But Plant's plan, if adopted, would have seen that come to an end and the college increased its lobbying for university status.

Capilano's upgrade is a necessary adaptation to the realities of the modern workplace, said college president Greg Lee.

"The world has changed dramatically since that day (when the college opened)," said Lee. "By all measures the world has become more complex."

Post-secondary education has increasingly become a necessary tool for young people both to get hired and to perform their jobs, he said. The university label can only improve their chances.

The change should also help attract international students, who currently contribute some \$20 million to the college's budget, added Lee.

Current students were on board with the idea, said fourth-year student Stephanie Wood, who gave a short speech at the event.

"I'm proud to say I'll be graduating from Capilano University," she said. "What was just a dream is now a reality."

When, exactly, the upgrade will take effect is not certain. The legislature must first amend British Columbia's University Act, and the college will likely have to make some changes in order to meet requirements, such as hiring faculty with PhDs to head up certain programs. "We know there's a lot of work ahead and we can hardly wait to get going," said Lee.

Students who graduate from Capilano's degree programs after the redesignation has been implemented will receive university degrees; those who graduate beforehand will get college degrees or diplomas. However, if they request an academic transcript in the future, the institution will be described on it as a university, said Lee.

The college is expecting no rise in tuition as a result of the

change, he added.

Capilano's redesignation comes the same week other colleges announced downsizings as a result of provincial cuts. Vancouver Community College said Thursday it would be cutting programs, eliminating student spaces and laying off as many as 80 faculty to make up for a \$5.8-million shortfall. Malaspina College laid off seven faculty members the same day.

But at a media scrum after the Capilano College event, Campbell painted the funding cuts as more of a reallocation of resources, saying the province had actually added \$68 million to post-secondary spending this year.

"We want to make sure resources are going to things that are in demand," he said.