

## Introduction

Since 2003 BCcampus has issued an annual Online Program Development Fund (OPDF) Request for Proposals (RFP) to all of BC's public post secondary institutions. The OPDF call for proposals emphasizes inter-institutional collaboration and partnerships for development of online learning resources. Development is focused on giving students access to more programs that will help them complete degrees, diplomas and certificates.

On June 11th BCcampus announced the \$750,000 2007 OPDF call for proposals. This years OPDF brings the cumulative total investment in online learning resource development through the OPDF over the years to \$6.25 million. The announcement included distribution of the RFP, application form, and OPDF FAQ. Closing date for OPDF proposals was set as September 28, 2007. These materials are available from the BCcampus web site at:

<http://www.bccampus.ca/EducatorServices/CourseDevelopment/OPDF/CallForProposals.htm>

Earlier rounds of the OPDF invited proposals for developing a broad variety of online learning resources including courses, programs, learning objects, tools and technologies. The for-credit online course category has been the most popular and was kept again this year as one of the categories in the 2007 OPDF RFP. The 2007 Online Program Development Fund invited proposals in two categories:

1. Courses and Co-created Content (expected allocation ~2/3 of fund = \$500K)
2. Professional Development Resources (expected allocation ~1/3 of fund = \$250K)

Since its inception BCcampus has actively supported educational technology professional development across BC's public post secondary system. As the system partner for the Educational Technology Users Group (ETUG) BCcampus provides coordinating resources, funding and program planning support for ETUG's spring and fall workshops and the annual Innovation Awards. The BCcampus network of online communities including the EdTech Online Community and BC eLearning Marketplace and Expo Online Community support discussions, sharing of best practices, webcasts, polling, file sharing and other professional development activities. This year, for the first time, BCcampus is pleased to extend support for professional development through the OPDF.

The 2007 OPDF acknowledges the growing importance of complementing online learning development and delivery with educator professional development resources on how to effectively do so. BCcampus is committed to supporting the development of educational technology capacity in the public post secondary system.

The requirements for professional development described in the 2007 OPDF were based on data and recommendations put forward in the "Learn Together – Participate, Collaborate, Innovate, Showcase and Share Program" Report (Johnson, 2006). This report summarizes a 2006 survey of educational technology pro-d needs across BC's public post secondary system.

The Learn Together report is available on the BCcampus web site at:

<http://www.bccampus.ca/Assets/Educator+Services+Reports/BCcampus+Educational+Technology+Professional+Development+Report.pdf>

All OPDF developed learning resources become accessible across BC's public post secondary system for sharing and reuse through the BCcampus Shareable Online Learning Resources (SOL\*R) repository <http://solr.bccampus.ca>. Out of 306 total proposals received in the 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006 rounds of the OPDF 80 were selected for funding to develop 261 courses, 44 course modules, 150 learning objects, and 18 virtual labs & tools. Many of these projects have completed their development process producing online learning resources that are now in operational use and available for sharing and reuse by others through SOL\*R. Over 900 educators across BC's public post secondary system have established SOL\*R accounts and are now accessing and reusing these resources.

All OPDF funding goes directly to public post secondary institutions and they are encouraged to partner. In addition to emphasizing inter-institutional partnerships, the OPDF encourages BC public post secondary institutions to partner with outside agencies including BC e-learning companies, not-for-profits, and professional associations. Partnerships add needed expertise and maximize the number of students using the online learning resources produced.

OPDF evaluation and award is done by independent professional peer review against a set of criteria based on guidelines expressed in the call for proposals. An eight member evaluation team drawn from across BC's public post secondary was formed for 2007 OPDF evaluation and began within 2 weeks of the RFP closing date.

## 2007 OPDF Results

BCcampus received a total of 40 proposals in response to the 2007 OPDF call for proposals. Of that total 27 were for the courses and co-created content category, and 15 for professional development (two proposals involved both categories). The combined request for funding amounted to \$2.9 million dollars. Institutions committed to provide \$1.54 million dollars of matching in-kind funding. Twenty-four of BC's 25 public post secondary institutions participated as lead or partner in at least one proposal with over 85% of the 2007 OPDF proposals involving partnerships. Seventy seven percent of the proposals involved partnerships with other post secondary institutions. Thirty percent of the proposals involved partnerships with outside organizations (associations, companies, etc.) seeking to extend reach and benefits out to non-profit agencies, BC e-learning companies, school districts, industry partners, First Nation groups and other key organizations throughout the province. BCcampus extends a special thanks to everyone who participated in these proposals.

Proposals were evaluated using a process of independent review proceeding to group consensus and award October 15-23, 2007 by a team of eight reviewers including representatives from University of Northern British Columbia, Thompson Rivers University, British Columbia Institute of Technology, Malaspina University College, North Island College, Camosun College, College of the Rockies and the Carnegie Foundation. The evaluation team selected 11 proposals for award.

Proposals selected for award cover a wide variety of domain areas and use cases for online learning resources including:

- A fully online degree in psychology. This year marks the third OPDF grant made in support of creating a fully online psychology degree. Earlier grants have been for first and second year level courses. This year's grant puts the remaining second, third and fourth year courses required for a psychology degree online. Once these courses have been developed all core mandatory courses required for a psychology degree will be available online.
- Two online lab-based science courses that provide the building blocks for a web-based Associate of Science program
- Development of three online geography courses that round out a fully online Associate of Arts degree along with establishing an opportunity for students to get an Associate of Arts degree in Geography as early as 2009-2010 when these three geography courses are completed and offered.
- A large multi-institutional collaboration to develop a Provincial Online Medical Office Assistant Certificate program to support the growth and demand for assistants in the health care industry
- Creation of a new online course that will provide BC educators with enhanced skills and knowledge on how to design and use authentic forms of assessment in online learning environments.
- Development of year one courses for an online program in sustainability assessment
- Development of a collection of best practice resources and ongoing dialogue related to First Nations Pedagogy for Online Learning
- Development of resources and tools for creating a self-sustaining peer-based mentoring system to familiarize and support educators in their use of the 3D immersive and interactive virtual world, Second Life.
- Development of two online pulp and paper operations courses (Introduction to the Business of the Pulp & Paper Industry and Environmental Controls in the Pulp & Paper Industry) that provide flexible access for thousands of people currently working full time in the industry.
- Creation of the first course of an online Advanced Diploma in Human Resources Management. Course content will match the BC Human Resources Management Association required professional competencies.
- Development of an English Language Training, grade 12 equivalent, multimedia, online English course for ESL students.

Additional details on projects, partnering institutions, dollars awarded, and outcomes are provided in the following table:

## 2007 OPDF Successful Proposals

	Title	Partnering Institution(s)	Outcome
1	Filling-In-The-Blanks Part II: Developing a set of psychology courses to facilitate completion of bachelor's degree requirement for major/minor in psychology	Kwantlen University College, University of Fraser Valley, Camosun College, Thompson Rivers University	Develop a total of seven courses in core psychology degree areas spanning across the 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> , and 4 <sup>th</sup> year level.
2	Web-based Associate of Science Program Development 2008 Year 1	North Island College, College of the Rockies, Thompson Rivers University, Tatlayoko Think Tank, Tatla Lake School	Develop a Remote Web-Based Science Laboratory that will allow students to control actual lab equipment and collect real data over the Internet and 2 online courses – one in physics and one in geology that will eventually be part of an entirely web-based Associate of Science degree program.
3	Develop An Online Associate Degree of Arts in Geography	Camosun College, Langara College, MapsWest, Ministry of Agriculture and Lands Integrated Land Management Bureau	Convert three geography courses GEOG 214 Digital Geomatics, GEOG 220 Natural Resource Systems, and GEOG 236 Geography of Cities to online. Development of these three online courses rounds out a fully online Associate of Arts degree along with establishing an opportunity for students to get an Associate of Arts degree in Geography.
4	Medical Office Assistant Certificate Program – Phase 1	Camosun College, Capilano College, College of New Caledonia, College of the Rockies, Douglas College, Malaspina University College, North Island College, Northern Lights College, Northwest Community College, Okanagan College, Selkirk College, Thompson Rivers University, University College of the Fraser Valley, Vancouver Community College	Develop 4 online courses – Medical Terminology I, Medical Terminology II Anatomy & Physiology, Medical Transcription, Medical Administrative Procedures, as phase I of a provincial online medical office assistant certificate program. This program supports the growth and demand for assistants in the health care industry.
5	Authentic Assessment and Evaluation in Online Environments: A Course for Post-Secondary Instructors (pro-d)	Royal Roads University, Malaspina University College, University of British Columbia, Camosun College	Develop and deliver a new online course that will provide BC educators with enhanced skills and knowledge on how to design and use authentic forms of assessment in online learning environments.
6	Online Pilot Program in Sustainability Assessment	Simon Fraser University, British Columbia Institute of Technology, University of Northern British Columbia	Year one funding to develop two courses and five workshops on assessment for sustainability. The resulting pilot program targeted to professionals and students in the fields of urban and community planning, policy, and management, represents the first of its kind offered in BC in an online format.
7	First Nations Pedagogy for Online Learning (pro-d)	Nicola Valley Institute of Technology, Kwantlen University College	Develop collection of best practices in support of creating and implementing online learning opportunities for aboriginal learners. Development will include 4 resources; mixed mode courses, implementing active learning strategies, teaching and facilitating online courses, and instructional design for online courses. Initiative supports ongoing dialogue and sharing across institutions.
8	Introducing Educators to Second Life	British Columbia Institute of	Develop 4 in-world orientation workshops, 2

	(pro-d)	Technology, Simon Fraser University	assignment course modules, and 4 professional development course modules that will familiarize educators with Second Life and support them in their use of it. Includes the provision of an initial structure and tools for creating a self-sustaining peer-based mentoring system.
9	Pulp & Paper: Online Courses for an Educated Workforce	Malaspina University College, College of New Caledonia	Develop two online pulp and paper operations courses (Introduction to the Business of the Pulp & Paper Industry and Environmental Controls in the Pulp & Paper Industry) that provide flexible access for thousands of people currently working full time in the industry.
10	Online Course Development – Human Resources Management System (HRMS)	Malaspina University College, Camosun College	Creation of the first course of an online Advanced Diploma in Human Resources Management. Course content will match the BC Human Resources Management Association required professional competencies.
11	ELT 89: Grade 12 Equivalent, Multimedia Online English Course for ESL students	College of the Rockies, Camosun College	Develop an English Language Training, grade 12 equivalent, multimedia, online English course for ESL students

Only a small number of professional development proposals were awarded funding. Of the anticipated award of \$250K only \$104K was awarded. Comments from the evaluation team indicate a need for greater collaboration, coordination, sharing, and use of professional development initiatives across the entire public post secondary system. A significant number of professional development proposals came from, or were supported by, three different organizations who all currently play a role in professional development across post secondary:

- the EdTech Users Group (ETUG) and its Steering Committee (SCETUG)
- the University College & Institute Professional Development (UCIPD) group, and
- the Northern Educational Developer's Network.

In an effort to support and further system wide professional development that involves and benefits as many public post secondary institutions as possible BCcampus plans to invite and host a follow-on session bringing representatives of these three groups together to share current activities, discuss plans, and work toward common aspirations. The goal will be to combine efforts into a single proposal to be funded using remaining 2007 OPDF funds.

Thanks to all those who submitted proposals and congratulations to the 2007 OPDF winners. Please coordinate news releases associated with successful projects with AVED. Representatives of all projects receiving a grant will be invited to an OPDF orientation day. BCcampus is pleased to support the growing importance of online learning initiatives at all BC public post secondary institutions. OPDF projects improve access and provide student choice everywhere in the province.

For additional information contact:

Paul Stacey  
 Director of Development  
 BCcampus  
 555 Seymour Street, Suite 200  
 Vancouver, British Columbia  
 Canada, V6B 3H6  
 e-mail: [pstacey@bccampus.ca](mailto:pstacey@bccampus.ca)  
 phone: 604-412-7736