
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development
BCcampus

\$2M INVESTMENT IN BCCAMPUS FOR NEW ONLINE PROJECTS

VICTORIA – A \$2-million provincial government investment in BCcampus supports online education projects that will provide more learning opportunities for post-secondary students throughout British Columbia, announced Murray Coell, Minister of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development.

“By strengthening our distance and online learning system, we make education available to all students – particularly those living in rural and remote communities, and those whose lives demand a more flexible schedule for their education,” said Coell. “The calibre of the approved projects from last year’s investment is so impressive that another \$1 million has been invested this year for more proposals that will provide even greater access and more choices for B.C.’s post-secondary students.”

Many of the new projects partner two or more of the province’s post-secondary institutions, and some involve partnerships with organizations outside the provincial post-secondary system, including federal government agencies, non-profit groups and associations, and private sector groups.

Government’s initial investment of \$1 million in 2008 supported 21 projects that will produce 13 online courses, 126 learning resources including instructional videos, learning objects and teaching tools, further development of a virtual science lab, a number of online learning curricula and the development of virtual learning environments.

“Students today expect us to be part of the Internet and as digitally sophisticated as they are. They’re used to receiving information on demand, and we must meet that expectation by supporting educators in their development of quality online courses, materials and resources,” said BCcampus executive director David Porter. “The 21 projects currently underway are a solid investment in delivering these services, and today’s further investment will ensure our continued success and relevance through other innovative proposals.”

In response to the Province’s additional investment of a further \$1 million in 2009, BCcampus expects to distribute a 2009 Online Program Development Fund (OPDF) request for proposals to all B.C. public post-secondary institutions at the beginning of April, seeking proposals for development of more innovative online learning resources.

This RFP will also be posted to the Educator Services section of the BCcampus website at www.bccampus.ca/Educators/educator-services/apply-for-funding.htm.

First announced in October 2002, BCcampus provides access to online education services offered by provincial public post-secondary institutions. It administers provincial development funding through the BCcampus OPDF, which helps educators and institutions develop online courses and programs targeted to students' need to access education courses from anywhere in B.C. to complete degrees, diplomas and certificates.

Since 2003, the fund has invested \$7.25 million to create online learning resources, resulting in the development of 304 courses, 67 course modules, 318 learning objects, and 26 virtual labs and tools for supporting online course developers. All materials developed through the fund can be reused and adapted by faculty at any public post-secondary institution in B.C., free of charge.

British Columbia has become a recognized world leader in collaborative online learning through BCcampus's work with institutions, not only in collaborative program development, but also in developing and integrating online processes to give students the services they expect to get online such as a single secure sign-on for online application services, online course and program searches, authentication and transfer of student records. For more information on BCcampus, visit www.bccampus.ca.

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1 backgrounder(s) attached.

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