

NorQuest Students Welcome Support from Community

NORQUEST COLLEGE BELIEVES THAT ALL LEARNERS have the potential to succeed. To ensure they do, NorQuest provides an array of services to help them overcome personal, financial or educational barriers.

"You can't fail at NorQuest—they won't let you," one student said about the support they received.

But NorQuest does not do it alone. The College relies on the support of the community to make sure students have the tools to achieve their personal, educational and career goals.

Students sometimes find themselves in unforeseen circumstances or situations beyond their control. They might feel they have nowhere to turn. In these situations students are able to access assistance through the donor-funded Student Financial Aid fund which finances the NorQuest Food Bank, the Emergency Student Assistance and Emergency Student Loan.

"To be recognized for all my hard work is a real confidence builder and inspires a great deal of pride in me and my family."

—Valerie, an award recipient

"If we weren't here to turn to for help a lot of these students would end up dropping out of school because they can't study while they are wondering where the next penny is coming from," says Gill Young Student Aid and Award Officer.

These funds supply students with groceries and immediate access to financial assistance if they are faced with an emergency situation. Last year over 440 students were aided by the fund.

"I don't know if I would have been able to go back to school without the financial support that I received. That is why it is so encouraging to have donors to assist the Student Financial Aid fund. Their contributions really do make a difference," says graduate, Chutima.

In addition to the Student Financial Aid fund, the College also provides Learning Support Services for students with dis-



NorQuest's Peer Support program was made possible through a donation from Syncrude Canada

abilities or students who require additional help. Sometimes the solution is as simple as a coloured sheet laid over text to assist with readability or as complex as JAWS, a software program used by blind students to help them use the computer.

Sometimes the support that a student needs is a pat on the back and someone to tell them they are doing a good job. This emotional support might come from a teacher or classmate. Sometimes it comes in the form of an award or scholarship. "It amazes me how the recognition of an award can make such a positive rewarding impact on a student," says Maria Bavaro, Scholarships and Awards Advisor.

In 2006-2007 donors financed more than \$100,000 in scholarships and awards that were distributed to 292 deserving students.

"To be recognized for all my hard work is a real confidence builder and inspires a great deal of pride in me and my family," says Valerie, an award recipient.

Organizations in the community are also becoming involved, helping fund programs that could not otherwise be offered. Syncrude, for example, has donated \$15,000 to assist in the development of the Peer Support Program. Through this program students are tutored by others who are more advanced.

"Funding for programs like this is essential. The College operates on a tight budget and this program is 'extra' to what can be achieved in normal operations," says Carol Delainey, Coordinator, Communications and Operations for Academics for Careers and Employment.

Syncrude Canada Dedicated to Education

“EDUCATION IS KEY TO BUILDING strong communities,” says Alain Moore, Public Affairs advisor at Syncrude Canada Ltd.

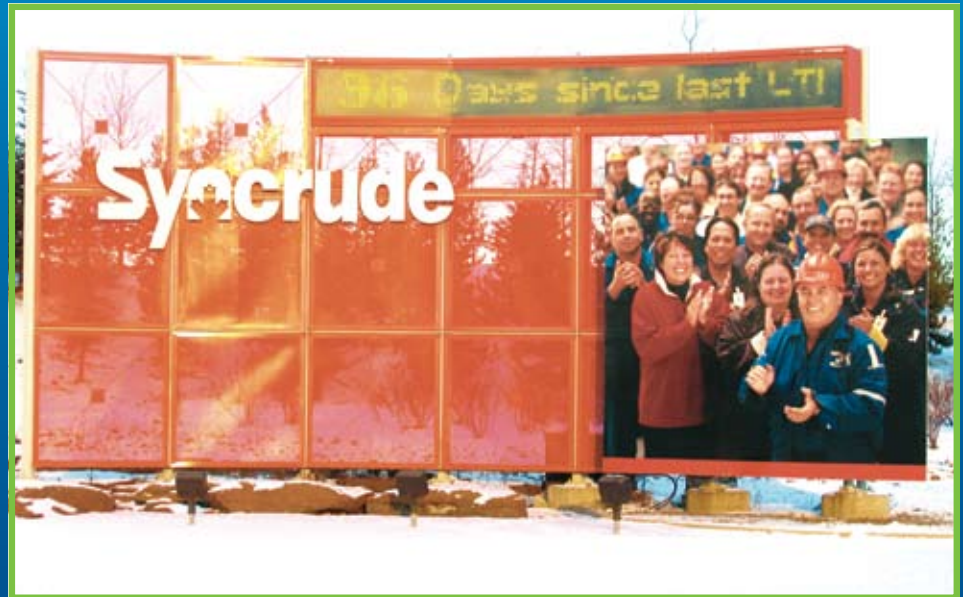
Syncrude, the world’s largest producer of synthetic crude oil, understands the value of education. Located just outside Fort McMurray in the Athabasca Oil Sands, Syncrude Canada not only supplies 13 per cent of Canada’s oil requirements but also employs approximately 4,700 permanent employees, employees who require an education.

Like NorQuest, Syncrude believes in encouraging learning and innovation and making education a possibility for everyone. Whether facing financial obstacles or needing a little extra academic assistance, NorQuest prides itself in providing its students with whatever they need to succeed. However,

without the support of individuals and corporations such as Syncrude, providing this level of support for our students would be difficult.

“We ...aim to support... educational programs that focus on building capacity in our young people so they can take advantage of the opportunities presented by Alberta’s strong economy,” says President and CEO Tom Katinas in a letter accompanying their 2006 \$100,000 pledge. This pledge has since been used to create the Jim Carter Aboriginal Scholarship and has fashioned the Peer Support Program, an academic support for students in Academics for Careers and Employment in which academically successful students give learning assistance to those less advanced.

For Syncrude, a company whose future depends on ensuring their communities continue to educate their citizens, supporting the local post-secondary institutions is enormously important. “There is a need for skilled labour in our economy,” says Mr. Moore. “High school is just the beginning of getting there.”



Zoe Demetrius

I was born and raised in Edmonton with my parents and four siblings. I dropped out of school at age 16 and began a life of self-destruction. School no longer mattered anymore, and somehow I didn't either.

In 2003, I finally had enough of barely living. Like other people, I wanted to make something out of my life. I craved change and wanted to be happy. That is when I entered NorQuest College. I started in the Ben Calf Robe Upgrading Program, bridged into Skills for Employment and Training and then completed the Customized Occupational Training. The programs gave me the ability to enter the job force. While at NorQuest I accessed counselling, financial aid, learning support—every support available to me. Without these supports, dropping out would have been a major possibility.

My dream is to become a real estate agent as well as own and operate a small business. In five years, I see myself trading in real estate and watching my children grow up comfortably. NorQuest has definitely helped me achieve my goals of education and employment. The big world is very different once you get out into it. NorQuest prepared me with skills, confidence, and stability, and for that I will be forever grateful.

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NorQuest College Foundation Donor Recognition

NorQuest College and the NorQuest College Foundation gratefully acknowledge the following donors, as well as those who wish to remain anonymous. These donors have contributed to the success of our students, with combined gifts of \$1000 or more, between January 31, 2008 and March 31, 2008.

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*The NorQuest College Foundation gratefully recognizes the multi-year financial commitment of these Circle of Success Donors.

A Message from the Foundation Board



People often ask me, "Why NorQuest?" or "What is so different about NorQuest?"

I really enjoy answering those questions because it gives me a chance to share NorQuest's story.

Yes, NorQuest creates opportunities for students to succeed in an inclusive environment. But there is more to it than that. There is a community, maybe even an army, on a mission at NorQuest doing everything possible to ensure that students succeed. Employees at the college raise money annually to support students through its SHINE Campaign. This year the campaign raised more than \$88,000.

Departments and individuals participate in a variety of events throughout the year. The SHINE breakfast and lunch engage and inspire staff. It is also awe-inspiring to see a record 115 participants this year get up early, put on their NorQuest gear and join the Great Human Race to raise money for NorQuest. The most recent event at NorQuest is "The Climb for SHINE – Mount Everest Challenge." Employees have committed to pit themselves against the world's largest mountain by climbing stairs for 19 days to raise money for students.

Why NorQuest? More than anyone else, staff and faculty at NorQuest College are willing to do whatever they can to support students. They know about the courage it takes for many students to return to school and what it is they really need to have success. The commitment and dedication NorQuest employees give to students in addition to what is in their job description is above and beyond Mount Everest's Summit. These are extraordinary people.

Andrew Megson

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The NorQuest College Foundation Newsletter is produced by the NorQuest College Community Relations department. If you would like to receive the electronic version of the newsletter, submit an idea for an article, have any questions or comments pertaining to the newsletter, or would like to be removed from the mailing list, please contact the newsletter editor, Andrea Danko by email at andrea.danko@norquest.ca or phone 780.644.5917.

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