



September 11, 2006

Government funds new NorQuest literacy program for young immigrants

Edmonton ... Immigrant youth can now strengthen their literacy skills through a new pilot program funded by the Government of Alberta and delivered through NorQuest College. Advanced Education Minister Denis Herard and Dr. Wayne Shillington, President and CEO of NorQuest College, announced the Youth in Transition program at NorQuest College on September 11.

“Young people who have immigrated to Canada may not have acquired all the necessary skills before having to leave high school. This program will help these youth improve their literacy skills before pursuing post-secondary studies or a job,” Herard said.

Herard added, “Today, the number of jobs requiring advanced literacy skills and post-secondary education is increasing, which has significant implications for those about to join Alberta’s workforce. Through this program, we’ll ensure these youth are well prepared for further learning and for work.”

The Youth in Transition program began September 5 and will accommodate up to 25 students. More than \$236,000 has been provided by the Alberta government to fund the 10-month pilot project, which was collaboratively developed by NorQuest College, the Edmonton Public School Board, the Edmonton Catholic School Board, Catholic Social Services and the Mennonite Centre for Newcomers. The program was designed to meet the unique needs of immigrant youth whose second language is English and whose schooling was interrupted prior to coming to Canada. Program staff will help to strengthen each student’s reading, writing, numeracy, oral language and computer skills. Each student will be matched with a mentor and provided with an opportunity to participate in the college’s Student Ambassador Program.

“NorQuest is proud to offer immigrant youth a literacy program to ease the transition from high school to post-secondary,” said Shillington. “By doing so, we ensure young people the opportunity to advance their education, increasing their chance of success both in the post-secondary system and in Alberta’s growing workforce.”

The Alberta government supports literacy programs in 83 communities throughout the province. Government has increased funding for community programs by 18 per cent in the last three years. It now totals \$9.2 million. The NorQuest Youth in Transition program was announced during International Adult Learners’ Week, which runs from September 8 to 14 in Alberta. More information is available at <http://www.advancededucation.gov.ab.ca/adultlearnweek/>.

Visit www.norquest.ca to learn more about NorQuest’s many English language training and career programs.

- 30 -

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