

## Colleges impress Irish delegation

Postsecondary leaders from Ireland got a first-hand look at Ontario's colleges last month during a tour that explored opportunities to allow more college students in Canada and Ireland to study abroad.

"It was a very successful trip, really terrifically worthwhile," said Michael Loftus, the head of the Faculty of Engineering and Science at the Cork Institute of Technology. "We got a great welcome from the colleges, a real openness, a real sense of ambition for Canada."

Nine delegates representing five institutes of technology from Letterkenny, Tralee, Cork, Dundalk and Athlone and the association for the institutes spent a week visiting 12 colleges throughout the province.

The tour was part of an effort to develop strategic partnerships that could allow more students to study abroad as part of their higher education and training, and provide more opportunities for faculty and staff exchanges and collaborative research.

Loftus said there appeared to be an excellent opportunity to enter into a system-to-system partnership with Ontario.

"We have a lot in common," he said. "We're close to industry, we have a major focus on innovation, job creation and making a direct contribution to the economy. There's much in common between the two systems and we hope to optimize that."

The trip followed a similar visit that Ontario



Postsecondary leaders from Ireland visited Durham College in Oshawa (above) and 11 other colleges as part of an effort to develop partnerships with Ontario.

delegates made to Ireland in April.

The delegation visiting Ontario was split into two groups that visited 12 colleges:

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Cork Institute of Technology**

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Seneca and George Brown colleges in Toronto, Confederation College in Thunder Bay, Algonquin College in Ottawa, Durham College in Oshawa, Niagara College in

Welland, St. Lawrence College in Kingston, Fleming College in Peterborough, Georgian College in Barrie, Conestoga College in Kitchener, Mohawk College in Hamilton and Sheridan College in Oakville.

The delegates also visited tourist attractions such as Niagara Falls, the CN Tower and the Parliament Buildings.

"It has truly been a win-win proposition," said Linda Franklin, president and CEO of Colleges Ontario. "We have started something that will pay off for students and colleges on both sides of the Atlantic."

## Creating new spaces for students

Producing more college and university graduates continues to be a priority for politicians as Ontario heads into a fall election.

The Liberal government has spent much of the summer announcing new investments in capital improvements at the colleges. The announcements are part of the government's 2011 budget commitment to create 60,000 new spaces in colleges and universities by 2015-16.

Meanwhile, the Ontario Conservatives' election platform, Changebook, also calls for the creation of 60,000 new spaces for college and university students.

"The parties recognize that a well-educated and highly skilled workforce is important to Ontario's long-term economic strength," said Linda Franklin, the president and CEO of Colleges Ontario. "Creating new spaces will help ensure more people will get the higher education they need to pursue their career goals and to make a positive contribution to our prosperity."

The NDP's recently released platform

did not address postsecondary education. However, NDP Leader Andrea Horwath said the party will be announcing more policy proposals in the run-up to the Oct. 6 election.

The government's announcements of new investments have included funding for e-learning and distance education at Algonquin College in Ottawa, the creation of a new biomass energy research centre at Confederation College in Thunder Bay, and the construction of a new Health and Wellness Centre for students at Sault College in Sault Ste. Marie.

### A diamond occasion

Janice Martellacci expected the diploma, but she didn't expect the engagement ring.

Martellacci, 22, was on the stage for her graduation ceremony at Algonquin College in Ottawa, awaiting her handshake and diploma. Next thing she knew, her boyfriend and fellow Algonquin classmate, 26-year-old Jacob Sancartier, took the microphone.

"At first, I thought I wasn't going to graduate, because the lady (handing out the diplomas) was walking away," says Martellacci. "Then I heard Jacob's voice. I didn't hear anything else because my heart was pounding."

"You look so beautiful," said Sancartier, as the crowd cheered. "Have you ever had the perfect day? Did you ever just smile your way through the day? This has been every single day of my life since I met you, Janice."

He continued, as the cheers grew louder.

"Will you let me be there for you when you need someone strong? Will you let me keep you warm when you're cold? Will you let me protect you and keep you safe? Will you let me love you until the day I die? Janice, will you marry me?" Sancartier asked.

He ended, appropriately, on his knees as he slipped the engagement ring on. "I thought to



myself, he's proposing – say yes, say yes," says Martellacci.

The proposal received a standing ovation from the crowd and Algonquin president Robert Gillett, who had been aware of the proposal for six months.

"As we were leaving the stage, the president said to me, 'You can kill him now if you want to,'" Martellacci says.

"A graduation ceremony is a joyous

occasion, and this was a great way to add to the excitement," Gillett said. "This is truly an Algonquin story. These two met at Algonquin and we are very happy to have helped them start the next phase of their lives."

Martellacci met Sancartier, who is president of the Algonquin College Students' Association, at a college function more than one year ago.

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- Robert Gillett,  
Algonquin College

### New facility has got game

George Brown College is launching a new business incubator in Toronto that will help support startups in the video gaming industry.

The incubator will launch in September. It will allow video game developers to get access to affordable office space and to a shared boardroom, support services and technology that are also used to train students.

"The research we conducted on the feasibility of a video gaming incubator reveals a real need for more applied research and innovation," said George Brown president Anne Sado.

Bringing industry and students together, the college hopes to create an environment that helps its learners gain real-world experience while supporting emerging companies.

In addition to new classroom space, the new learning environment will also offer 10 offices and 19 desks that will be available for rent to

small and startup video game and digital media companies.

According to the Entertainment Software Association of Canada, Ontario's video game development sector will grow by 31 per cent over the next three years. Enrolment in the college's video game design and development programs is also up, leaping to 350 students from 40 students in 2008.

Seeing the sector's growth potential, George Brown conducted a feasibility study that was funded by the City of Toronto and the Ontario Media Development Corporation.

Karen Thorne-Stone, president and CEO of the Ontario Media Development Corporation, said the new incubator "will enhance the vibrancy of the video gaming cluster in Ontario."

#### Changes help support workers

Cambrian College in Sudbury recently helped nine personal support workers on Manitoulin Island keep their jobs.

The nurses' aides needed quick access to an official certification process to comply with new provincial legislation. The college responded by condensing its eight-month certification program to three months and using interactive lectures to help the workers get certified while remaining on the island.

#### Studying Indigenous culture

Canadore College in North Bay is accepting applications for two unique new one-year programs in Indigenous Studies.

One is a preparatory program that will help students plan their career paths, while the other prepares students for college programs in health sciences.

#### Lambton president retiring

Dr. Tony Hanlon, president of Lambton College in Sarnia, has announced he will be retiring at the end of the year.

Hanlon, who is in his 10th year as president, was responsible for the turnaround of the college, including a significant increase in enrolment and the elimination of a \$2.5-million deficit. The college has a \$4.5-million surplus this year.

#### Brew masters

Only a few months after it opened, the Niagara College Teaching Brewery is already a winner. It won three medals at the recent United States Open Beer Championships in Atlanta.

#### Targeting job opportunities

Ottawa has launched a new website, [www.WorkinginCanada.gc.ca](http://www.WorkinginCanada.gc.ca), to help students and older job seekers identify which sectors of the economy are hiring and what skills are needed for those jobs.

Human Resources Minister Diane Finley said some industries have struggled to find qualified employees, even during the economic downturn. "This is becoming a skills crisis. We want to avert that," she said.

#### Investing in health training

TBaytel has invested \$100,000 into the new building for the health and community services program at Confederation College in Thunder Bay. The facility offers training in areas such as practical nursing and medical radiation technology.

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