

AURORA COLLEGE HOSTS ASSOCIATION OF CANADIAN COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Mr. Speaker, on October 17th to 19th in Yellowknife, Aurora College is hosting the Association of Canadian Community Colleges symposium on Serving Aboriginal Learners in Rural and Remote Communities. This event is an opportunity for Aboriginal leaders, college educators, government officials and industry representatives to discuss strategies and best practices in Aboriginal education at the college level.

Hosting a national conference with a focus on Aboriginal learners is an honour for Aurora College. This unique conference attracts participants from smaller institutions with an Aboriginal student population, whose challenges and goals are similar to ours. Aurora College serves a population of over 650 full time students at three regional campuses, with numerous other students taking courses through one of the 25 Community Learning Centres. Most Aurora College students are Aboriginal; Dene, Métis and Inuvialuit, and many are from small, remote communities. Our jurisdiction has much to share with our colleagues from across the country.

Aurora College is ideally suited to host this event. The College delivers a wide range of programs and courses as close to the communities as possible. Staff at regional campuses, Community Learning Centres and the Aurora Research Institute focus on student success, Aboriginal perspectives and traditional knowledge in programming, and excellence in teaching and research. Aurora College now has more than forty years' experience in serving Aboriginal learners in rural and remote communities.

Many northerners are speaking, presenting papers, facilitating panel discussions, and attending this conference, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to have the opportunity to address the participants at the beginning of the conference. Respected Fort Providence Elder Margaret Thom is also present. Mrs.Thom is the Elder member of the Aurora College Board of

Governors, and she is the moderator for a discussion on Community-Based Programming and Support Services.

Other discussion topics at the conference include:

- attracting, preparing, and retaining Aboriginal and low-literacy learners;
- funding for community-based programming;
- Aboriginal support services;
- best practices in community-based programming;
- embedding traditional knowledge in college;
- taking action for First Nations post-secondary education;
- college-industry partnerships; and
- best practices in partnerships to support Aboriginal community development.

The conference also includes cultural ceremonies and events, including a feast and drum dance in Dettah, hosted by the Yellowknives Dene First Nation.

The Association of Canadian Community Colleges symposium is an exciting event that provides participants with the chance to share their best programs and practices, while learning from the knowledge and experiences of others. It is also a wonderful opportunity for participants to see what the Northwest Territories and Aurora College have to offer.

Masi, Mr. Speaker.