

# PRESS RELEASE



CÉGEP  
VANIER COLLEGE

821 Ste-Croix, St-Laurent QC H4L 3X9 Tel: 514.744.7500 Fax: 514.744.7505 info@vaniercollege.qc.ca www.vaniercollege.qc.ca

September 10, 2007

## *Canadian Educators Met at Vanier College to Focus on Training for Careers in the Environment*

The apple trees were blossoming when Vanier College welcomed fifty college and university representatives from across Canada to its tree-shaded campus, for the annual conference organized by the Canadian College Environmental Network (CCEN) and the Canadian University Environmental Science Network, on May 30-31, 2007. During those two days, Vanier's Environmental and Wildlife Management Program hosted the gathering where discussions focused on accreditation, enrolment and careers in the environmental sector.

Delegates looked at the formal process whereby the Standards Council of Canada and similar bodies, verify and recognize a school's competency to train people to work in the environmental sector. Such accreditation is crucial since some environmental jobs can be dangerous. Hence, schools and the environmental programs they teach must follow internationally recognized criteria and procedures to ensure that specialists perform their work safely. Receiving accreditation for following standards ensures that Canadian-trained technologists can work almost anywhere inside and outside Canada. Furthermore, close links between accreditation bodies and industry mean that students learn the techniques and competencies companies need in their workforce.

Keynote speaker, Dr. Tony Tilly, President of Sir Sanford Fleming College in Ontario, looked at the value of accreditation, and luncheon speaker, Thomas Mulcair, former Quebec Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks, called on participants to think about the impact their educational programming could have on the environmental agenda of the nation. As well, industry representatives gave the viewpoint of employers on the accreditation of environmental programs while a group of accrediting bodies including the Canadian Environmental Certification Approvals Board presented an update on how programs get accredited. As a result of these discussions, universities and colleges will be looking at the impact of accreditation on their graduates, and colleges will explore how to offer technologists further specialized training or upgrading beyond the college diploma.

"This conference was a wake-up call on the issue of accreditation," indicated Patti Duffy of Environmental and Wildlife Management at Vanier. "The lack of accreditation hasn't had an effect in Quebec yet, but if you want your graduates to be able to work outside the province, accreditation is important and might become absolutely necessary in the future."

During their stay in Montreal, delegates toured the St. Michel Environmental Complex where ultra-modern waste management strategies are reclaiming the Miron quarry, a large landfill site. They saw how decomposing garbage buried beneath a park drives a biofuel to energy plant. "We had an amazing tour. It was a highlight for everyone, because the technology is so advanced," commented Patti Duffy.

"It was a great conference," added Quentin Van Ginhoven, Coordinator of Vanier's Environmental and Wildlife Management Program, "and we hope that all Quebec Cegeps will participate in the meeting next year in Halifax."

-30-