“Where the Rubber Hits the Road”
Northwest Community College (NWCC)

• NWCC has the highest number of Aboriginal students of any post secondary institution in BC and the region served includes 25 bands

• Chair of the Board of Governors is Irene Seguin (Hagwiloo K’am Saxwhl Giis) from Gitwinksihlkw

• FN council – 39 First Nations Members

* focus is to develop policy recommendations to increase student success rates
Smithers Exploration Group (SEG)

• Non-profit organization serving the minerals industry in northwestern BC since 1971
• More than 300 members
• Respected in BC exploration community for community and provincial activism
• Draws on a large, forward-thinking pool of industry professionals who live in area
School of Exploration & Mining (SEM)

• Partnership between NWCC and SEG in 2004
• Ensures that curriculum is relevant to industry
• Meets industry & educational standards by developing competency-based training
• Training ladders from entry to associate degree levels, locally accessible to northern workforce
• 75% of the SEM Students are Aboriginal
Courses and Programs

• Mining Exploration Field Assistant
• Prospector Basic Training
• Environmental Monitor Assistant Program NEW!
• Surface Diamond Driller’s Helper
• Drill Core Technician NEW!
• Camp Management Program NEW!
• Geoscience Certificate NEW!
• Assoc. Degree – Environmental Geoscience
• Glacial Till Sampling
• Manifold GIS Introductory Course
• Metal Leaching Acid Rock Drainage
Project Background

- Northwest Community College, SEG and the Ministry of Energy Mines and Petroleum Resources (MEMPR) successfully partner on short exploration training courses in a bush camp setting, 2005- present

- Based on this, MEMPR developed a proposal for RAP with SEG and NWCC to HRSDC.

- To address the skills shortage in the industry and high unemployment/under-representation in industry of Aboriginal youth
‘Will the RAP Project build participants’ labour market skills and employability?’

Four Objectives:

– Building participants labour market skills and employability

– Increasing participants access and interest to skills, training and further education

– Building positive impressions of the mineral exploration, mining and environmental stewardship sectors as a provider of desirable employment opportunities for participants

– Generating efficient project design and process
Project Overview

- Pilot Project – Aboriginal youth aged 18-35, who are unemployed or underemployed
- Steering Committee
- Third Party Evaluation
- RAP students came from 27 different Aboriginal Communities
- 2.5 months of First Nations Team Leader training in spring 2007 & 2008 – 40 people trained, hired 20
- 11 weeks of training in two remote bush camps 2007 & 2008 – 100 Aboriginal youth
Specialized instructors brought in from industry:

- Biologists
- Ethnographer
- Geologists
- Prospectors
Support of students:
• Student Success Instructors: soft skills instruction, lead talking circles and one-on-one counseling
• Elders: one-on-one support and cultural mentoring and instruction
• Team Leaders: one-on-one mentoring, tutoring and emotional support
Katie Ludwig, Elder, Making Sure all 50 Students Made their Clan Vest
“Being involved in this program as an Elder in Residence and having the opportunity to pass along cultural knowledge to the students has been very fulfilling. The skills taught will be brought back to our communities by the students and Team Leaders and used to find work, teach others and bring further knowledge to our people for making decisions on exploration and mining applications.”

– Katie Ludwig, Gitxsan Cultural Teacher
Pam Mikołajczyk, Team Leader, Helping a Student With Mineral Identification
The Future Face of Mining DVD
Partners Roles and Responsibilities

- **Northwest Community College** – Program Management, Design, Coordination, Marketing, Recruitment, Instruction, Camp Management, Industry Liaison, Job Placement, Steering Committee, Federal & Provincial Funding, Evaluation and Reporting on Program and Site Characterizations (40 staff)

- **Smithers Exploration Group** – Camp Ownership/Advising, Industry Support, Program Design Advising, Steering Committee, Provincial Funding (2 staff)

- **Province of BC** – Chair Steering Committee, Wrote Proposal, Provincial Funding and Deliverables, Site Characterizations

- **HRSDC** – Steering Committee, Federal Funding, Deliverables and third party evaluation
Why Does RAP Work?

• Focussed on getting a job
• Incorporates the environment, industry, and culture - holistic
• Field camp delivery – simulates work environment
• Experiential – hands on teaching of environmental content in the environment
• Instructors are industry and content experts - enthusiasm
• Great camp staff and team spirit!
• Mentors: Elders, Team Leaders, First Nations Instructors/staff
• Healthy environment - safe, good food and accommodations
• It challenges students – builds confidence and self esteem
• Support from industry and personal involvement
“In the 22 years of my life this is the best thing that has ever happened to me.”
Attendance...

RAP 2007
- 50 students – day 1
- 44 students – day 63!
- Average of 88% attendance in both camps

RAP 2008
- 51 students – day 1
- 43 students – day 63!
- Average of 84% attendance in both camps
2007 RAP - 1 year after the program

- Completed Program 44/50 (88%)
- Industry Employment 26/50 (52%)
- Resource Employment 9/50 (18%)
- Other Employment 3/50 (6%)
- Returned to School 6/50 (12%)
- Total Employed / Returned to School 44/50 (88.8%)
2008 RAP - 1 ½ months after the program

- Completed Program 43/51 (84%)
- Industry Employment 19/51 (37%)
- Resource Employment 7/51 (14%)
- Other Employment 4/51 (8%)
- Returned to School 0/51 (0%)
- Total Employed / Returned to School 30/51 (58.8%)
Industry Support
Field Trips to:
• Active mine sites – blasting at Huckleberry Mine!
• Orphaned Mine Sites
• Mine sites undergoing reclamation
• Active exploration sites
• Core shacks
• Preparation lab
• Sites of cultural significance
Ganokwa Students at Equity Mine
Rob Boyce, Geologist, teaching Prospecting Skills at the Suskwa Camp.
Michael Vincent, from Huckleberry Mines, Demonstrating Core Teching Skills at the Mine Core Shack.
Opportunities to Show your ‘Big Find’ to a Geologist for a Second Opinion
Highland Helicopters sponsored Helicopter Training for All RAP Students and Staff
Vanessa quizzing, Geologist, Peter Ogryzlo, at Huckleberry Mine
Warner Naziel, teaching Ethnobotany
Andy Lecuyer, Leading an Expedition to Put New Skills to Work, Conducting a Site Characterization of the Empire Historic Mine Site
What the Students Said...
Russell “It’s a fun course. People come here to learn and the knowledge gets you ready for the workplace.”
Adrian, “I’ve met a lot of new people from different Native Nations. It’s a friendly environment with lots of good classroom and practical experience.”
Joe “I’m taking this course for my family’s well being. Things are really clicking. It feels good to be learning again. It’s been quite a while.”
Christine (Komek) “It’s a big change from home. It’s a new start with lots of new opportunities for learning and work.” “I’m happy and proud of what I have accomplished. We don’t have trees at home.”

(Komek is from Cambridge Bay, Nunavut)
‘Bing’ “It’s lots of work but if you have the patience it’s a great course. Mining will be around forever and I need to take care of my mom.”
Yvette “It’s been a new experience and it’s helped me become a better person and think more positive about myself.”
Peter “It’s been a good experience and I’ve learned a lot and met great new people while studying in the great outdoors.”
Kenneth “I’m not afraid of learning new things. It’s been a great experience, full of new skills and new people. I would recommend this camp. It changes your life”
Gerry “I recommend this course to anyone who is ready for lots of hiking and learning about the outdoors. It’s been a great experience. The staff have made me feel very comfortable.”
Armin “I’m doing things I never thought I would do. I’m helping people when I can and getting lots of career training and experience.”
Robert E “This course is life changing: great friends, food, experiences and opportunities for learning and work. I especially like the hiking and field work. It gives you chance to work hard and sweat it out.”
Frisco “It’s a great opportunity to find out if you’re fit for this kind of career.”
Shane “It’s well worth it. I’m learning things I never thought I could learn.”
Kenneth, “I’m not afraid of learning new things. It’s been a great experience, full of new skills and new people. I would recommend this camp. It changes your life”
"I have a better understanding of the industry, and [RAP] has built my confidence that I can be part of the exploration workforce."
“The RAP Program demonstrates that exploration and mining companies have an opportunity to work towards earning a social licence to operate through participating in the delivery of leading-edge and well-planned training and employment programs.”

Info Mine Publication