

## “Keep Advancing Your Career at Saskatoon Business College”

For over 100 years, Saskatoon Business College (SBC) has offered outstanding, market-ready business education to Saskatchewan students. With innovative programs and competitive technology, SBC confirms its reputation as a small but progressive college that Campus Director Blair Chapman calls a “one-year gateway” to the career world. For their about 250 graduates each year, he says, “our mandate is to provide students with job skills and to find employment in as short a time as possible. . . . We cater to the segment of the population without the resources for lengthy [post-secondary] study.”

Students of diverse ages and backgrounds advance their careers through such practical course offerings as SBC’s 12 month Mining Industry Business Specialist Program, the only one of its kind in Canada. It focuses on uranium and potash mining specific to Saskatchewan, so that graduates are prepared for entry-level positions in sales, marketing, logistics and scheduling. Chapman says that the program has been successful, including for those who come from mining backgrounds and “who want to be in the field, but may not want to be underground.”

The new year-long Information Technology (IT) program, unique to the province, trains tech-friendly students to become Microsoft Certified Solutions Experts (MCSE), the globally recognized standard for the IT profession. The program provides through “lots of hands-on training, and five, three week practical work placements” in relevant local businesses. Market demand for these graduates far exceeds supply.

Providing private-public partnered work placements are vital to the success of SBC programs. The college’s Legal Assistant program offers paid internships before graduation. And “100 percent” of those graduates “find employment within two to three weeks of graduation,” Chapman reports. SBC Healthcare partners with the Saskatoon and Regina Qu’Appelle Health Regions, training personal care aides who walk into jobs upon graduation. He adds: “We know of no other private college in Canada that is doing that with healthcare” programs.

Another unique offering to the province is SBC’s Creative Media Specialist program in graphic design (CMS). The 10 month course prepares students to become Adobe Certified Associates, when they pass certification in Photoshop and Dreamweaver. SBC has upgraded software to the latest Adobe Creative Cloud Suite, so all training is “done in the Cloud,” says VP, Marketing and IT Admissions, Rich Chapman.

Recognizing the demand for online education, SBC bought the electronic learning management system Blackboard two years ago and now offers four courses online in such subjects as Accounting and Medical Procedures. More are coming: “Our goal is to have one full [program] online by the end of 2015,” Rich Chapman says. The format “gives people the opportunity to study on their own time and schedule.”

Corporate training is offered in Microsoft Office, Design and Media, Accounting, Project Management and more. Customized programming is also available. Expanding these services won SBC a SABEX award in 2014.

Instructors, time and finances are dedicated to staying abreast of technology. The college purchases “the latest versions of software [and] state-of-the-art labs,” Rich Chapman says, for their 25,000 square foot facility. These include a new server and an upgrade to MS Office 2013. Sixty-five new computers were recently added. “We have the most up-to-date computer network in Saskatchewan,” Chapman says. “We’re a big proponent of keeping up with technology, because it gives our grads an edge on the market and makes them more valuable employees.”

Instructors are continually working behind-the-scenes and between courses to stay current with curricula and technology and to ensure that training meets employers’ needs. The college periodically reviews curricula and because of their small size, “We can make changes overnight,” Blair Chapman says. Not so with larger, traditional, public institutions.

In addition to progressive programs and technology, instructors and Blair Chapman, the graduate-employee liaison, work to match as many as 60 percent of new graduates with first jobs. “One-on-one” personalized counselling is available to students, recent and past graduates. Instructors provide specific references. The college’s extensive network with local businesses helps students from “low socioeconomic backgrounds” who are “funded by student loans” and “don’t have connections in the community,” Chapman states. Eighty-five percent of graduates find jobs in their fields, 80 percent of them within the first three months.

SBC has also been accredited since 1987 by the National Association of Career Colleges (NACC), which “makes [our] graduates on par with the rest of the country,” Rich Chapman says.

With market research and commitment to keeping programs current and flexible, SBC helps students to keep advancing their careers. Blair Chapman says: “The primary reason for our success is the care we take in training instructors and staff who provide the best training for our students.” SBC is still excited by education: “It requires us to be nimble.”

Nimble graduates from a nimble career college.