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For immediate release

Funding Cuts Reverse a Year of Progress on the Literacy Front at Vancouver Community College

“Premier Campbell is pushing the delete button on more than just emails. He is also deleting his promise to make BC the most literate jurisdiction in North America,” said Frank Cosco, President of the Vancouver Community College Faculty Association. “We got formal notice today that funding for Regional Literacy Coordinators has been cut and those Coordinators are now being given layoff notices. What happened today at VCC is being repeated at other colleges and universities where funding for literacy coordination programs is being eliminated,” Cosco added.

“In February 2008, BC’s Auditor General issued a report on Premier Campbell’s commitment to literacy—***Literacy: Creating the Conditions for Reading and Writing Success***—in which the AG recommended greater coordination. That report became the basis for a \$1.7 million provincial program that hired Literacy Coordinators who were based in post-secondary institutions around the province. We’re now told that funding will be eliminated,” said Cosco.

“These Coordinators were doing the work that the Auditor General called for, work that ensured better coordination and collaboration on literacy initiatives. In VCC’s case, without the funding from the provincial government, there is simply no capacity in the current budget to maintain that program. It’s a terrible loss, given the good work that had been done to bringing together various agencies and employer groups to achieve better results in the key area of youth literacy,” Cosco noted.

“What’s so discouraging about this latest funding cut is that it hurts those who need help when the economy is in trouble. Literacy programs are an essential first step for thousands of current and potential students who need to either upgrade existing skills or move to new career options. By cutting the funding to these programs, the provincial government is making those transitions more difficult, a move that not only hurts those people, but also undermines a much needed recovery in BC’s economy. We are going to be contacting government MLAs as well as the Minister of Advanced Education to press for a reconsideration of this funding decision,” Cosco concluded.

- 30 -

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