

# Quartet of post-secondary institutions pools expertise in east-side campus

UBC, SFU, BCIT and Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design pioneering a new Great Northern Way

Glen Korstrom

Four B.C. post-secondary institutions have joined forces to share an East Vancouver campus that will encourage students to spread course loads between schools.

Simon Fraser University, the University of British Columbia, Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design and the British Columbia Institute of Technology have combined to occupy 113,200 square feet of space in three former Finning International Inc. buildings along Great Northern Way. Commercial tenants lease the buildings' remaining 40,300 square feet.

"We have hundreds of students here now so the place is alive," said Great Northern Way Campus, Ltd. president Bruce Clayman. "This is the only situation in North America where four academic institutions are co-operatively developing a campus site where each can bring respective strengths."

Students learning at GNWC are currently affiliated with one of the facility's four academic institution partners. Starting in 2006, however, Clayman expects students to register in GNWC-developed programs supported by student services at all four schools.

About 350 students are now taking Emily Carr continuing education courses at GNWC while a further 250 students are enrolled in BCIT diesel mechanics courses on-site. SFU and UBC will start offer-

ing courses next year, he said.

"BCIT is only offering the diesel mechanics courses here because they don't have space at their main campus," said Clayman.

He stressed that the courses are temporary and not part of GNWC's vision.

The campus' academic plan is to be the hub for three academic areas:

- urban sustainability,
- digital entertainment, and
- transforming arts and culture.

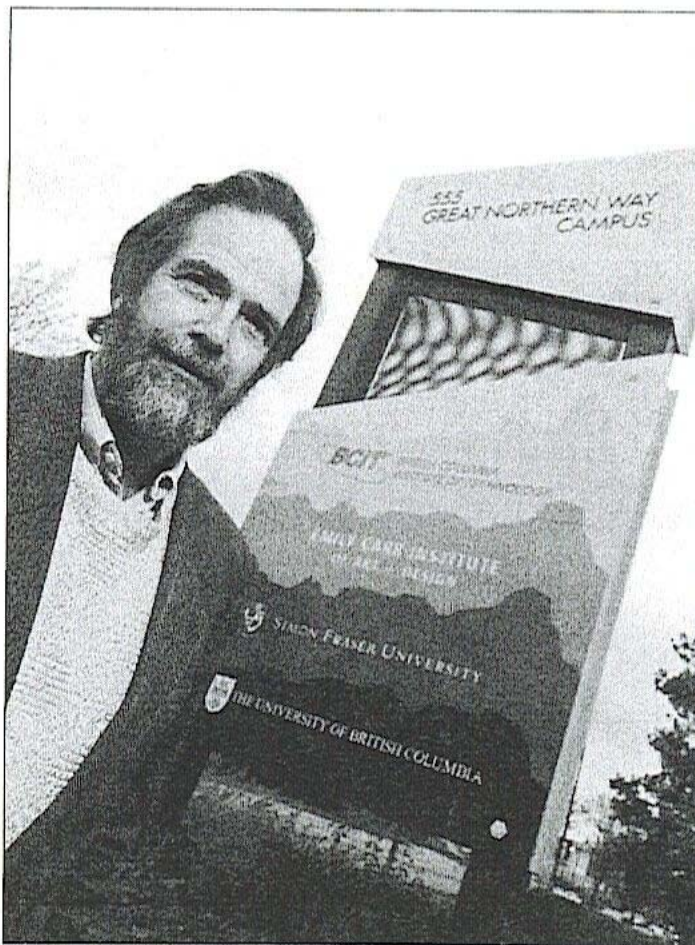
Since swapping his role as SFU's vice-president of research for that of GNWC's president in September, Clayman has seen headway in each of those areas.

Progress on the urban sustainability front has come from plans to break ground next year on a fourth GNWC building. That structure, dubbed the Centre for Interactive Research on Sustainability, will house urban sustainability research and related courses.

Federal and provincial governments have both committed to help fund the \$23-million, 29,300-square-foot development's first phase. Additional funding comes from UBC, industry sponsors and others, Clayman said.

All four post-secondary institution partners will lease space in the building, as will BC Hydro and Fuel Cells Canada, Clayman said.

Progress on the arts front includes the GNWC's decision in late November to name one of the site's current buildings the Black Box Studio and designate it for art and theatre students who need



GNWC's Bruce Clayman: "we have hundreds of students here now ..."

space to experiment, perform and install exhibits, he said.

Emily Carr president Ron Burnett is excited that the open shell building will be a domain for artists.

"I'm really pleased," he said. "A lot of people in visual arts do a fair amount of work that combines installations and performance, so it fits dramatically well with us." Burnett said ECIAD also rents

much of the 14,900 square feet of space that it leases from GNWC to alumni to use as art studios.

Meanwhile on the digital entertainment and video game production training front, Clayman has caught the ear of executives at Electronic Arts (Canada) Inc. and Radical Entertainment with discussions about his school's plan to create a practical post-graduate video game production program.

"Video game development depends on great minds and strong training programs that will draw those people and solidify Vancouver's reputation as a hub," Danielle Michael, Radical's vice-president of business development said.

"For us, being located right across the street from the campus is a plus."

Clayman's goal is to launch that post-graduate program in the fall of 2006 if industry is on side and enough students enrol to make a strong business case.

"The program will be designed to serve the needs of industry, and we would hope industry will help students in the program," he said.

Clayman noted that his campus owes its existence to a strong relationship with industry.

Finning donated an 80-per-cent interest in the 18.6-acre site to a trust made up of representatives from the four schools in 2001.

It then sold its remaining 20 per cent to the trust for slightly more than \$8 million the next year. ♦

■ gkorstrom@biv.com