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Native Education College

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NEC Native Education College Announces Closure

VANCOUVER– The Board of Directors of NEC Native Education College has made the decision to cease operations of NEC Native Education College effective July 31, 2007 said Board Chair, Chief David Walkem. This notice will affect approximately 45 bargaining unit and management employees of NEC.

“This decision has not been taken lightly and the Board of Directors looks back proudly at serving the needs of the Aboriginal community by providing post secondary training in a traditional long house setting since 1967,” Chief David Walkem said.

A combination of factors and changing trends has contributed to this decision:

- Provincial and Federal policy changes to social assistance that have had an adverse impact on the most vulnerable and disadvantaged Aboriginal students, providing funding challenges that restrict their ability to improve their economic circumstances
- Declining enrolment.
- Recent competition from publicly funded post secondary institutions offering similar or competing programs
- An insufficient level of funding from the Provincial Government and the inability of our students to pay tuitions that would enable the college to attract and retain employees with competitive wages and benefits in a challenging job market.

NEC opened its doors in 1967 and became British Columbia's largest private Aboriginal College. The focus has been to meet the needs of Aboriginal adult learners requiring developmental, vocational, and applied academic programs to access employment or further post-secondary education. NEC is governed by the NEC Native Education College Society, a registered charitable organization.

Programs have been offered in a learning environment that is culturally rich with small classes taught in a traditional longhouse. Students had access to many resources and in-house support that includes student counselling, educational assessment and assistance with student funding options.

The Board of Directors is aware of the impact closure has on a significant sector of society that will now have to look elsewhere for assistance. Management will assist students wishing to further their education in an alternate setting.

Inquiries should be directed to either David Walkem, Board Chair, or Huia Martin, President and CEO.