

Increased class seats at UVic lowers admission standards

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Jennifer McLarty Weekend Edition

B-average students have a good shot at attending UVic this fall with the creation of 500 new full-time undergraduate seats.

The extra room is part of a provincial government initiative to create 25,000 more post-secondary spaces by 2010, including 1,900 at UVic, 1,100 at Malaspina University College and 550 at Camosun College.

"In order to meet the new target, we have to drop the grade point average for admissions to about 75 per cent in 2005/06," said UVic registrar office administrator Cled Thomas.

"Based on our experience with modeling, that's the only way we'll be able to attract enough people to fill the seats."

The lower standard is good news for students who previously failed to make the grade due to stiff competition for limited room at B.C.'s four major universities.

Since 2001, the entrance GPA to UVic's largest faculties - humanities, sciences and social sciences - has hovered around 80 per cent or higher.

Approximately 2,100 people were denied admittance to B.C. colleges and universities in 2003 because they didn't meet the academic standard or couldn't afford tuition, according to statistics compiled by the Confederation of University Faculty Associations.

Advanced Education Minister Ida Chong says those numbers will change as more post secondary seats are added in the next five years.

"I've bumped into several students in my riding who've said they're definitely going to take advantage of the lower admission requirement at UVic," said Chong, MLA for Oak Bay-Gordon Head. "It opens more doors to post secondary education."

The 500 new UVic seats are allocated for domestic students only.

The early admission deadline passed Feb. 28, but applications will be accepted until May 15. UVic expects to admit about 3,000 new undergraduate students in 2005/06.

Canada West University to open Sept. 26

If you can't get into UVic, there's still time to apply to Victoria's newest post-secondary institution, set to open Sept. 26. University Canada West will accept students on a first-come, first served basis as long as they meet the minimum grade requirement of 65 per cent

"We've got about 40 to 50 students in the application process, but we've only just started our recruitment campaign," said UCW spokesperson Jim Griffith. "We could accommodate 1,000, but I think that's dreaming for a brand-new university. Our biggest selling point at the moment is our experienced professors." Courses will be offered in arts, applied science, commerce and business administration.

UCW - the province's first private sector university - is located in the former Blanshard elementary school. Administrators signed a 99-year lease with the Greater Victoria school district in December. Staff are scheduled to move into the building next week.