

NEXT

THE RACE TO
REMOTE LEARNING
SOLUTIONS FOR A
CHANGING WORKFORCE



University
of Regina

Centre for
Continuing Education



WELCOME TO THE CENTRE FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION

Delivering hundreds of continuing education courses and facilitating more than 31,500 enrolments every year always presents a myriad of exciting challenges. This year, the pandemic delivered challenges no one could have predicted. At the same time, it also stimulated innovation and opportunity as we looked for new ways to support education and training.

For us, this changing world highlighted the need to build more capacity for online courses and programs, increase community engagement and partnerships and accelerate new program streams as industries and workers pivot and adapt to the changing landscape.

In many ways, the very nature of the Centre for Continuing Education (CCE) makes it ideally suited to such an environment. CCE's interactive technology already supports distance learning and the flexibility to deliver online courses at all times of the day throughout the year. Our courses are fully integrated with individual Faculties and created by the Instructional Design team who are skilled at crafting successful online programs.

But there is no doubt that change is at our doorstep and we're approaching some of what we're doing in new ways. One of the trends is a demand for shorter programs that are very specific but that do not require a lengthy time commitment. A recent example is CCE's new Business Essentials program which has been designed to help businesses respond to the pandemic.

We are also focused on growing our portfolio of courses to better serve industry and employers in Regina and across Saskatchewan. To meet that need, CCE is working towards launching additional micro-credentials. These are program credentials that are smaller than a degree or diploma but are developed or customized to serve the needs of employees in our labour market.

The pandemic has paved a path to new technologies and smarter ways to engage more broadly with our stakeholders here at home and beyond our borders. Collaborations and partnerships will play an increasingly important role.



CHRISTIE SCHULTZ
Director, Centre for Continuing Education

At CCE, we've always believed that learning is a lifelong process and doesn't start or stop with a degree. To grow and thrive both personally and professionally, each of us will need to continue building skills across a career and a lifespan.

Over the next few years there will be an opportunity to reflect on this unprecedented time and identify the kinds of things we carry forward into the future. While I don't think there will be universal agreement on what those things are, I do believe that CCE and its approach to delivering relevant, flexible and accessible learning will be an essential part of what comes next.

TOTAL REVENUE FROM CCE:
\$43 MILLION
+16% FROM 2018-19
(\$37 MILLION)

Did you know?

CCE CO-OFFERS:
29%
OF ALL CREDIT COURSES AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF REGINA IN PARTNERSHIP
WITH THE FACULTIES

CUSTOMIZING SOLUTIONS FOR A CHANGING WORKFORCE

With Saskatchewan's steadily growing population and diverse labour force, CCE has been at the forefront of a growing interest in customized training programs. For years, its Corporate Training Division has been the go-to resource for employers looking to engage employees in tailor-made professional development courses, programs and certificates.

Now, in the midst of a pandemic, Heather Renshaw, CCE's Business Development Consultant, continues to see this as a growing trend but one that presents new opportunities.

"If you've got a computer and an internet connection, you can take our training."

“We’ve always been known for our high-quality, face-to-face training and students often remark how engaging our courses are. Last fall, we had just begun looking into offering some online training for 2021, but then COVID hit, and we had to quickly jump in and set up all of our courses for immediate remote delivery.”

While clients have ranged from government and corporations to non-profit organizations, they typically shared one commonality. “In the past our clients came from Regina or nearby surrounding areas. Now with the switch to remote learning, we’re seeing an appetite for what we offer right across Saskatchewan and beyond.”



Of course, the geographical location of clients is only one of the changes, says Renshaw. “We’re seeing a change in the nature of the corporate training that employers are looking for and a specific interest in leadership skills. Organizations are wanting us to create a customized version of our leadership certificate for smaller groups. They’re using it to create higher functioning teams, tying it to employee performance and seeing it as an investment in employee retention.”

That interest in leadership skills as many workplaces struggle to operate in the new normal, has also prompted new program offerings. “From the minute we went home to work at the end of March we started asking ourselves: ‘What do people need, what can we do and how can we adapt?’” recalls Renshaw.

One of the answers was the creation and launch of the Business Essentials program. Designed to assist businesses impacted by the pandemic and help them gain foundational tools for success, this new remote delivery program is applicable to any industry. “Topics such as how to embrace change and adapt, how to use a crisis to spark innovation and how to deliver an outstanding customer experience to retain and grow your business are so timely right now,” says Renshaw. “We think this is a unique program in Canada.”

In fact, the program is so unique it has garnered attention across the country resulting in a new partnership with Durham College in Ontario. “Starting in January, we’ll be offering our program to students in the Toronto area. One of the great things about this program is that even though it was created in response to the pandemic, the content will remain relevant long after it’s over.”

A focus on responding to community needs also prompted the introduction of a monthly professional development webinar series says Heather. “We recognized that people working at home needed a sense of connection in the midst of so much uncertainty and stress. One of the webinar topics was about how to manage and lead teams remotely. We sold out with 300 people registering.”

The popularity of the topic inspired the CCE team to expand the content into a 14-hour course that is being launched in December 2020. “Our programs are very user-friendly, taught by industry experts and connected to students via Zoom. If you’ve got a computer and an internet connection, you can take our training.”

Moving forward, there’s no doubt that adaptability and flexibility will continue to be hallmarks within the Career & Professional Development Division of CCE. “We’re excited about creating new courses and programs that meet emerging demands here at home but also about sharing what we do across Canada and even internationally. Being able to deliver our programs remotely has opened up new doors for us.”

CAREER & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NON-CREDIT STUDENTS:

2019-2020 = **1,085**
379 CORPORATE
TRAINING STUDENTS

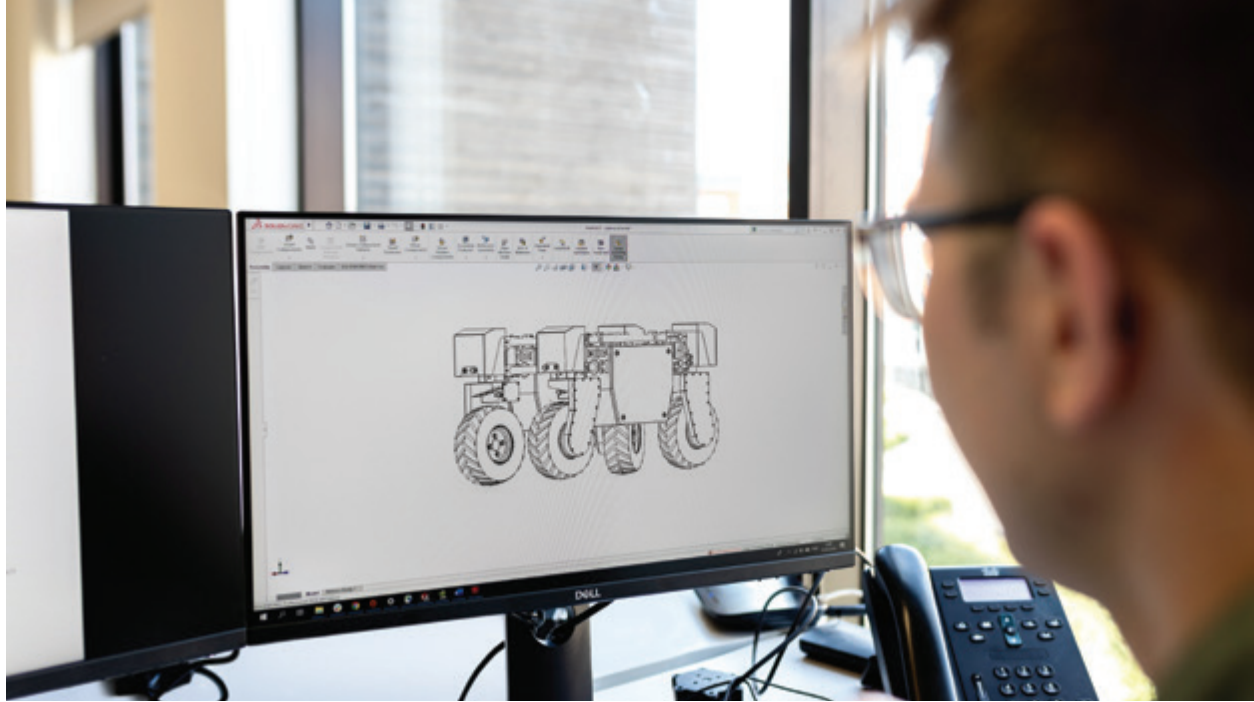
CAREER & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CREDIT STUDENTS:

2018-2019 = **2,315**
2019-2020 = **2,964**
+28%

OF THE 2,964 STUDENTS:

1,534 WERE INTERNATIONAL
1,430 WERE DOMESTIC

EXCITING TREND IN CONTINUING EDUCATION



In a rapidly changing world, many employers encourage their employees to continually seek out learning opportunities to upgrade their skills. To meet this need, CCE is working to develop and offer micro-credentials – courses that serve the needs of workers in the labour market by focusing on specific skills and/or knowledge.

“There is a desire to grow the portfolio of courses we offer to better serve employers and employees across Saskatchewan,” says Christie Schultz, Director of CCE. “Micro-credentials will be an important part of our response. This approach also reflects a trend towards creating shorter programs that serve our market, but that don’t require a huge time commitment from the student.”

Micro-credentials offer flexibility and allow students to emerge with the specific skills they need to advance their careers. In some instances, existing University classes may be combined



or subdivided in new ways to create a micro-credential. But CCE will also create customized micro-credential programs that respond directly to the needs of a company or industry.

As the demand for continuing education and continual learning grows, more people who want to advance or change careers will be in and out of educational programs. “Work is already underway to start identifying and developing our first micro-credential programs,” says Schultz. “We definitely see this as an exciting part of CCE’s future.”

“The skills I’ve learned allowed me to train my successor in my management role as well as lead my new organization. It also helped me in the other work that I do for my communities. I sit on several boards that serve the best interest of my First Nation and the City of Regina. I have gained the confidence to share my thoughts on what is the best direction for the long-term sustainability of the community. I continue to educate myself with class offerings and programs at CCE because you get a lot of people skills that you don’t always get a chance to develop.”

TYRELL JAKE SINCLAIR

*University of Regina Alumnus, Centre
for Continuing Education student*

*Professional Management Certificate
Business Analysis Certificate
Professional Leadership Certificate
Advanced Leadership Certificate*



THE RACE TO REMOTE LEARNING

“We had to turn on a dime.” That was Instructional Designer Brenda Hackl’s perspective on what happened at the University of Regina when the campus closed its doors at the beginning of the pandemic. Instructors in all faculties turned to the Flexible Learning Division and the Instructional Design team as classes switched from face-to-face to online in a matter of days.

“We’ve known how to help others teach remotely for a long time but the pandemic has ramped it up to a whole new level.”

“Instructors and faculty members had to make the shift instantly to remote delivery,” recalls Brenda Hackl. “It was a scramble and we needed to find ways to support staff by introducing them to various technologies and online teaching techniques.”

CCE, working with the teams from Information Services and the Technology Learning Centre, developed several strategies to help instructors meet the challenges including a series of webinars and the expansion of existing online support structures. Instructors were encouraged to use Zoom, an online platform for video conferencing which was primarily developed to use for meetings. “If you’re on Zoom and you have 50 students in 50 little boxes along the side of your computer screen, you can’t see people’s faces to tell you how they are responding to your class. So, we work with instructors on how to use interactive tools such as breakout rooms and polls in Zoom for lectures. If they are creating pre-recorded lectures, we show them how to do that in ways that are engaging and interesting.”



Summer months were spent helping instructors re-tool for fall classes. “The most common question we had was: ‘Help me do what I love to do again.’ We can show them how to appreciate teaching in the remote environment, while recognizing that the experience is different from face-to-face teaching,” notes Hackl.

For the staff in the Flexible Learning Division, developing quality and robust online, live, and blended programs and courses is what they do best. “We’ve known how to help others teach remotely for a long time but the pandemic has ramped it up to a whole new level.”



To meet the extraordinary demands, the Instructional Design team has boosted its capacity from 21 staff to 28. “The people in our unit are very collaborative. Working with others is one of the most beneficial ways to do this job well.”

Moving forward, it’s anyone’s guess as to how and when life on campus will return to normal. In the meantime, having more programs online has led to unexpected benefits including allowing students to pursue a degree while remaining in their own communities and opening up new options for people with disabilities to study from home.

“I don’t think remote delivery is going anywhere, anytime soon,” says Hackl. “Remote teaching is another modality that instructors, who may never have done very much online, can now consider integrating into their teaching.”

While there is no predicting what happens next, thoughts are turning to the future. “My hunch is that it’s going to be a gradual return to on-site learning. Part of our job will be to determine what pieces remain remote, what might go fully online and what might be delivered in-person. Our next step will be to start thinking and planning for that shift.”

FLEXIBLE CREDIT COURSE ENROLMENTS:

2018-2019 = **19,180**

2019-2020 = **20,731**

+8%

FLEXIBLE CREDIT COURSES OFFERED:

2018-2019 = **503**

2019-2020 = **519**

+3%

ENJOYING LIFELONG LEARNING AT HOME

There is a growing recognition that, as we age, lifelong learning is one of the best ways to stay engaged, keep your brain sharp and pursue personal interests that you may not have had time to enjoy while you were working.

Charlotte Elwert, a CCE student, has enrolled in several courses over the past few years. “Before I retired, I knew that I wanted to take classes at the Lifelong Learning Centre (LLC) to keep growing, to explore the power of ideas and continue to experience the joy of learning.”

With an incredible diversity of topics available, courses run the gamut from language to lifestyle and technology to genealogy.



“This is a great opportunity to learn more and to participate in classes with other senior learners,” says Elwert. “You meet so many wonderful people from different backgrounds and you learn together.”

At the University of Regina, personal enrichment classes have long been a way to experience personal growth and connect with others. Now as people are spending more time at home, classes are being delivered remotely, making them a welcome outlet for older adults who may be feeling isolated and lonely.

“With the pandemic and spending more time indoors, I’m learning via Zoom as part of a virtual learning group,” says Elwert. “There are so many learning opportunities and it’s a chance to see and interact with other students and instructors on screen.”

The addition of remote learning has also allowed LLC to build its online community and reach older adults across the province.

“For me this is about personal growth,” adds Elwert. It’s been a really positive experience but I also look forward to the days when the age of COVID-19 has passed and it’s safe to socialize and meet my classmates for coffee again.”

HITTING THE RIGHT NOTE

While academic courses are often adapted to the online realm, other studies are more traditionally suited to a face-to-face approach. At the Conservatory of Performing Arts, finding ways to engage students in music, dance, theatre and visual arts during a pandemic required a new way of thinking and teaching.

"Covid pushed us to say 'We have to do this' because I think we need these creative outlets more than ever."





“When a student is learning how to play a guitar and the teacher is in the same room, it’s easy to adjust their hand position,” says Christa Eidsness, Division Head of the Conservatory of Performing Arts. “When classrooms closed, our teachers grappled with how to morph from a hands-on to a virtual world.”

The Conservatory started by offering webinars to their teachers that focused on best practices for teaching online. “We realized you have to learn a different ‘language’ to teach online. Because you can’t always physically show students, you have to think of images and really watch to make sure they’re understanding.”

Initially-hesitant teachers became believers in the new world as students embraced online opportunities. Dance classes and lessons were taught by teachers who had access to five portable carts that included webcams and speakers that could be moved to different classrooms.

The Conservatory also ran several dance camps for kids over the summer. “The instructor would show the class the moves online and the kids would record themselves at home. They’d put on performances every Friday after a week of rehearsing. You could tell the students loved making the videos and even put together their own costumes,” says Eidsness.

The online format proved to be a particular winner for kids in the eight to twelve-year old group. “For kids that were isolated, this was the perfect way for them to talk to other kids their own age and have fun.”

The world of remote and online learning was not an entirely new concept for the Conservatory, says Eidsness. “For instance, students in small and even mid-sized Saskatchewan communities don’t always have access to the private music teachers they need at higher levels. When we renovated the College Avenue campus in 2016, we set up one of the rooms for distance learning.” That room includes built-in cameras, two microphones and two 60-inch monitors to see and interact with students in a large format.

“I like my guitar lessons because I learn a lot and my teacher is really nice and pushes me to do better. I really enjoy talking to her. Taking lessons on Zoom is almost like you are actually there and I feel like I learn just as much.”

EVAN HALL

Student, Conservatory of Performing Arts

For as many challenges as the coronavirus presented, there were also benefits. Students in remote communities now have access to the same high-quality instructors typically found only in larger centres.

“Many of our orchestral instructors are members of the Regina Symphony Orchestra and have performing careers that take them around the world. In the past we have also accessed performers as they’re touring Canada and set up a Master class. Now we can connect on Zoom and not have to worry about travel costs,” says Eidsness.

From voice to violin, acting to wizarding, the scope of classes available at the Conservatory appeals to a wide demographic. “We have everything from newborns being introduced to music to seniors learning how to play the piano,” says Eidsness. “My trust is that music isn’t going anywhere and that people will still want to learn performing arts and how to do the things that we do. Covid really pushed us to say ‘we have to do this’ because I think we need these creative outlets more than ever.”



“Evan has been taking private lessons at the Conservatory for four years with the first three in-person and now he’s taking remote lessons. Remote lessons have actually been a very nice change. Of course, we miss some of the personal interactions of being in-person but we feel we are still getting the same quality of instruction. Also, I have three kids in music lessons so not having to pack up and drive has been a nice break. Evan’s teacher is an exceptional guitar teacher because she is beyond patient and kind. She also pushes Evan to do his best, and challenges him. She has also taken the time to get to know him on a personal level and they engage in all sorts of conversations about life!”

ALLISON HALL

Evan’s mother



SETTING THE STAGE



The transformation is underway! Construction crews have been working through the pandemic on the restoration and renewal of Darke Hall. Originally constructed in 1929 as a centre for the arts for the entire community, this century-old heritage building needed some love and care to meet modern performance standards and current building codes.

The goal was to retain the hall's beloved charm and character while making it completely accessible through the addition of a new ground level entrance, an elevator, wider aisles, expanded stage, better and accessible seating and washrooms, larger reception space, and back-of-house amenities for performers.



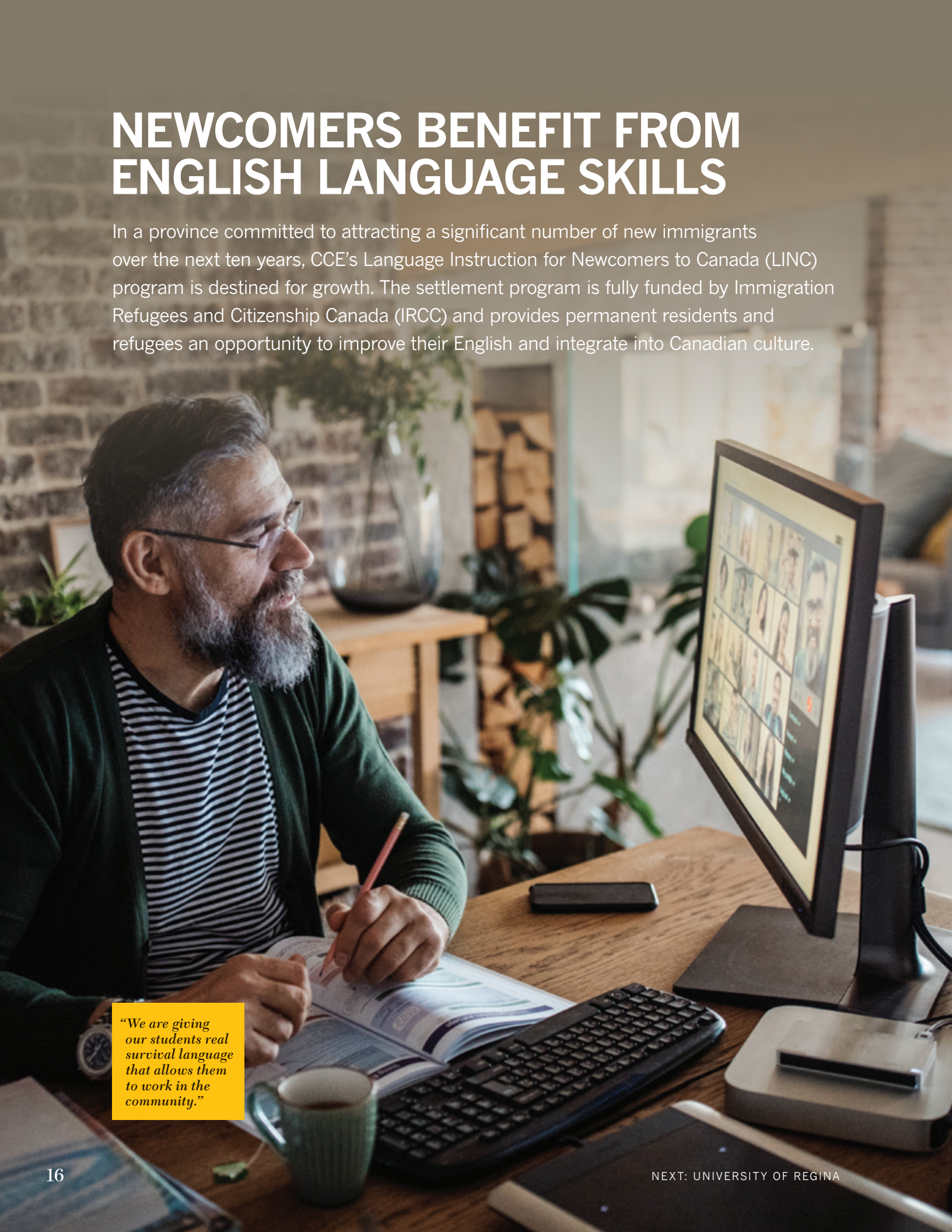
With exterior upgrades complete, the construction crew is now focused on the interior of the building: updating mechanical and electrical systems and installing new seats and theatrical systems. While access to Darke Hall, through the shared atrium with the Conexus building, is restricted due to construction, the new Conexus Credit Union celebrated its grand reopening in July and is open to the public.

Excitement is building as the doors of Darke Hall are expected to re-open and it will once again be a community hub for the performance and enjoyment of music, theatre, and dance.

*Watch for the
Darke Hall
renovations to be
completed in 2021!*

NEWCOMERS BENEFIT FROM ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS

In a province committed to attracting a significant number of new immigrants over the next ten years, CCE's Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program is destined for growth. The settlement program is fully funded by Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and provides permanent residents and refugees an opportunity to improve their English and integrate into Canadian culture.



"We are giving our students real survival language that allows them to work in the community."

Jacqueline Spalding, Director of the English as a Second Language (ESL) Program notes that LINC, their newest program, was launched in 2017 and sees it continuing into the future. “We’ve just signed a new five-year contract with IRCC. We have had students from over 40 cultures attend our classes so we know the need for the skills we’re providing is there.”

LINC Coordinator and Instructor Kourush Khandehroo agrees. “We are giving our students real survival language that allows them to work in the community. We begin with basic literacy levels and then, based on a needs assessment and government direction, we select themes or topics and customize the program.”

The topics are practical in nature and may include information on banking and financial matters, how to write a resume or how and when to phone 911 for emergencies. “We also bring in guest speakers from the RCMP or Fire Department, introduce students to Indigenous culture and local events and visit community resources. This is definitely more than just a language program,” says Khandehroo.

With topics built around the specific needs of the students, response has been positive. “We’ve heard from students who learned how to apply for a job or write a resume and then they were hired after they gained those skills,” adds Khandehroo. “It’s a flexible program that focuses on giving them what they need.”

Until the pandemic, LINC was taught as a series of face-to-face year ‘round courses. The shift to online learning presented some unique challenges for a student cohort with varying English language skills says Khandehroo. “We decided to create a module on computers so during the first few classes we taught them how to use technology and communicate with each other. If students were still having issues, then we would provide one-on-one online support.”

While the program continues to operate remotely, there is both an upside and a downside for students. “Overall our students are doing well. Some students who work during the day appreciate that they can now take our classes in the evening,” notes Spalding. “But some of our instructors feel that the social interaction and natural discussion that would occur in a classroom is lost, particularly for beginner level students. For many, the class provides a social outlet.”

Moving forward, Spalding believes the focus may be on more of a combination approach. “Blended classes will likely be the way of the future with half of the courses taught online and others in-person. We’re well-positioned in that our infrastructure and our instructors are now ready for that mode.”

IN 2019-20:
ESL’S ACADEMIC ENGLISH AND
LANGUAGE AND CULTURE PROGRAMS
WELCOMED STUDENTS FROM


**26 DIFFERENT
COUNTRIES**

INCLUDING

**565 STUDENTS
FROM MEXICO**

IN THE PROYECTA PROGRAMS
IN CO-OPERATION WITH UR
INTERNATIONAL AND THE GLOBAL
TRAINING INITIATIVES OFFICE.





“I use my Certificate in Public Relations from the University of Regina every day in my full-time work as a communications specialist for the Saskatchewan Registered Nurses Association. The competencies I developed in that program also gave me the confidence to set out building a community initiative called RaiseHER which helps women develop their professional and leadership skills through mentorship.”

TALITHA SMADU MCCLOSKEY

Centre for Continuing Education Student

Certificate in Public Relations

Director, University of Regina Alumni Association Board



University
of Regina

Centre for
Continuing Education

VISION

Expanding possibilities, strengthening communities.

MISSION

The mission of the Centre for Continuing Education is to meet lifelong learning needs by offering high quality, accessible, innovative and responsive education and training programs to learners of all ages by building on the strengths and collaborating with the resources of the community and the University.

EMAIL

cce@uregina.ca

WEBSITE

www.uregina.ca/cce

JANUARY 2021