

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

\$70,000 grant awarded for research into non-traditional adult learning

Calgary, AB (October 3, 2006) - As participation rates in adult education decline and concerns about labour shortages increase, Dr. Tara Hyland-Russell, Associate Dean of Students at St. Mary's University College, in conjunction with Dr. Janet Groen of the University of Calgary, has been awarded a \$70,000 grant by the Canadian Council of Learning to study a potentially untapped workforce: non-traditional adult learners.

Chosen from among 70 applications, the grant will fund a two-year research project into the barriers non-traditional adult learners face to accessing post-secondary education and the motivators which encourage them to seek further education.

The project will study programs across Canada based on Earl Shorris' Clemente model, which offer university-level humanities courses to non-traditional adult learners and their success in opening up opportunities for adults who typically find themselves unable to access both formal and informal learning.

"For many of these adults, the learning experience within these programs has been transformational and they have continued to pursue lifelong learning," says Dr. Hyland-Russell. "Even midway through one course, students find themselves shaping learning goals and beginning to dream about the future in a way they never thought possible."

Non-traditional adult learners may face internal and external impediments to post-secondary education such as low self-esteem, a negative history with learning institutions, a feeling of disenfranchisement, poverty, mental illness, addiction, domestic violence and homelessness.

Among the project's goals are to develop a profile of non-traditional adult learners in Canada; identify the factors that facilitate their access to and involvement in further education; identify best practices for teaching and learning; and to build collaborative partnerships with community organizations, post-secondary institutions and government agencies.

"This grant indicates St. Mary's University College is at the forefront of research which explores relevant and timely issues that matter to Canadian employers, government and society," says St. Mary's President, Dr. Terrence Downey.

About St. Mary's University College

St. Mary's University College is a Catholic post-secondary, student-focused liberal arts and sciences teaching and research institution. St. Mary's offers Bachelor of Arts degree programs and university-level instruction in 27 academic disciplines. For more information, visit www.stmu.ab.ca.

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