



# 2013 linkBC 2012/2013 Report Card

LinkBC works with college and university programs across the province to raise the professionalism of BC's tourism industry, through four key initiatives:

- 1** StudentConnect Programs & Services

**2** BC as a Tourism Learning Destination
- 3** Tourism Knowledge & Resources

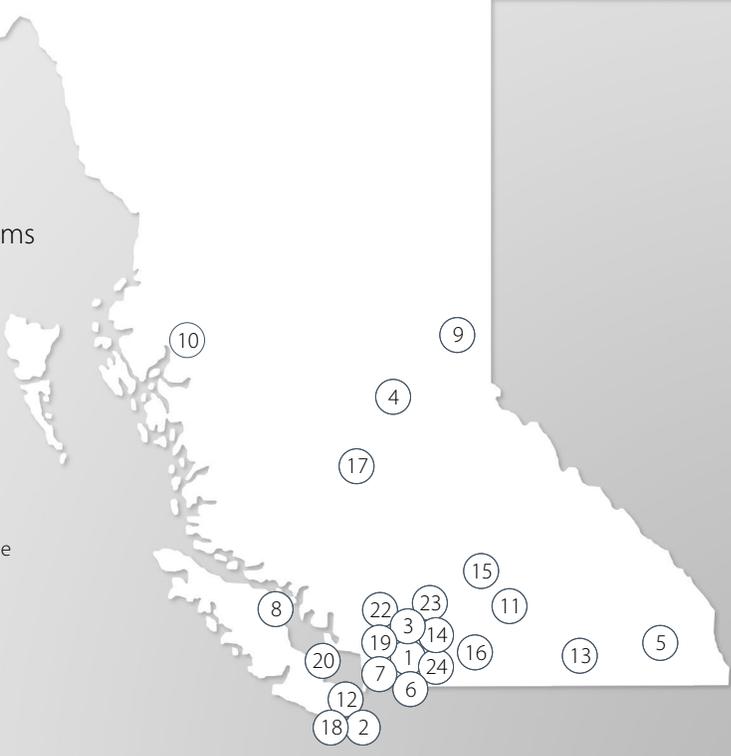
**4** Stakeholder Engagement

*This report card reviews our progress in these areas, and provides a snapshot of our plans for the coming year (2013/2014).*

(21)

the **LinkBC**  
 tourism & hospitality education network:  
 adventure, culinary, hospitality, & tourism programs  
 at **24** schools across BC

- |                                 |                                     |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. BCIT                         | 13. Selkirk College                 |
| 2. Camosun College              | 14. Simon Fraser University         |
| 3. Capilano University          | 15. Thompson Rivers University      |
| 4. College of New Caledonia     | 16. University of the Fraser Valley |
| 5. College of the Rockies       | 17. University of Northern BC       |
| 6. Douglas College              | 18. University of Victoria          |
| 7. Native Education College     | 19. Vancouver Community College     |
| 8. North Island College         | 20. Vancouver Island University     |
| 9. Northern Lights College      | 21. Yukon College                   |
| 10. Northwest Community College | 22. Canadian Tourism College        |
| 11. Okanagan College            | 23. Eton College                    |
| 12. Royal Roads University      | 24. Vancouver Premier College       |



**What is the LinkBC Annual Survey?**  
 This annual survey assesses awareness of, and support for, our activities. This year, 125 people responded: 63% students, 20% instructors/admin, and 17% industry. Their responses helped shape the grades for this report.

# Our team is changing!

LinkBC's advisory board, host institution Capilano University, and outgoing general manager Terry Hood are pleased to announce the appointment of Morgan Westcott as General Manager effective May 1, 2013. Morgan brings more than 20 years' experience in the tourism and hospitality sector, most recently as communications officer with LinkBC. Morgan has served as Director of Sales and Marketing at the Arts & Cultural Guide to BC, written copy for Tourism BC and the BC Lodgings and Campgrounds Association, taught tourism at the university level, and managed a food and beverage retail outlet. She holds a BA from UBC, a Tourism Diploma from BCIT, and an MA in Tourism Management from Royal Roads University.

Morgan replaces Terry Hood, who will be staying on to July 1 to ensure a smooth transition on key projects. "Terry laid a solid foundation for the work we're undertaking," shares Harley Elias, LinkBC's advisory board chair, "and we're incredibly thankful for his years of dedicated service."

Hood will remain active with his North Shore Project Leadership consultancy during this period he describes as "semi-retirement."

LinkBC also welcomed Amy Frew as "Graduate/Industry Representative" to the advisory board. An alumna of Selkirk College's Ski Resort Operations Management Diploma, Amy is an Employee Experience Officer at Whistler Blackcomb. She secured the majority of institutional votes in a tight race against seven other candidates representing institutions across BC.

The addition of this seat and elections process were just two outcomes of a board strategic planning session held last November. With a new manager in place, clearer policies, and tighter strategic policies, we're working with you to ensure BC leads the world in tourism and hospitality education.



Morgan Westcott

“ It’s gratifying to see that this unique network model - the only one of its kind in North America - will be heading forward with Morgan’s vision and strong leadership skills. I know the organization will continue to break new ground with initiatives like the Study Tourism in BC campaign, and I am looking forward to seeing the results. ”

-Terry Hood

We want to hear from you.

The report card you're reading is part of our ongoing commitment to accountability. We welcome your feedback at [info@linkbc.ca](mailto:info@linkbc.ca) or call 604.984.1750.

# 1 student·connect

StudentConnect increases successful school-to-work transitions, and maximizes retention of graduates in the industry.

## Provincial Case Competition



A platform for students to demonstrate research, presentation, and problem-solving skills by answering questions in front of tourism leaders at the annual industry conference. A record 15 teams participated in two themes: Tourism HR (sponsored by go2 and Tourism BC) and Hotel Packaging (Coast Hotels and Resorts).

For the first time all teams were treated to complementary hotel stays in addition to free conference registration and other perks.

95% of participants surveyed found the event was “a good use of my time” (rated good to excellent), and 100% stated they learned new skills and gained knowledge.

## Project Change



A competition enabling BC tourism students to become leaders and agents for positive change in the world. Now in our

second year, Project Change almost doubled the number of submissions – with 28 teams creating impacts including:

- Raised \$2800 (and counting) in cash to not-for-profits including the BC Children’s Hospital Foundation, SPCA, the Out of the Rain Youth Shelter, Movember, and others.
- Donated 175 jackets to the Harvest Project, 320 food-producing seeds and growing materials to Prince George Residents, hundreds of clothing and household items for families in need, hair to Locks of Love, and blood donations.
- Fed 200 people (and counting), through spaghetti dinners, community meals, and soup kitchens.
- Saved 1500 sheets of paper, removed thousands of plastic bags from the supply chain, took 220 plastic water bottles out of circulation, reduced 1008 Kg of CO2e (equivalent of one trip across Canada in a car), and saved over 70 kwh (and counting) of electricity.
- Drew thousands of people to awareness initiatives from a snowboard competition (donate a jacket to compete) to a new site helping students to coordinate carpools between campuses.

Projects were profiled in local newspapers, online, and on the radio, helping to spread the word about sustainability issues and positioning tourism and hospitality students as community and industry leaders.



“Thanks to the creators and sponsors of Project Change. It was a pleasure to participate!”

- Allison, Deanna, and Darrell, UNBC Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Management program, winners of the Delta Greens, Delta Cares award for “The Paper Project”

## Student-Industry Rendezvous



A networking event of over 425 students (21% increase over last year) and almost 100 employers at the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver. We invited tourism business representatives (new!) in addition to hotel managers and introduced a pre-registration system. Employers and students were asked to rate the event and:

- 94% said the event was “a good use of my time” (rated good to excellent).
- 88% made connections they would follow-up with after the event (a 10% increase over last year).

## Our Future Leaders

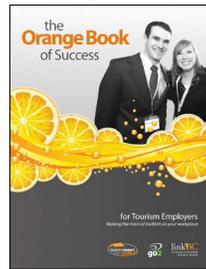
*Sponsored by the BC Hospitality Foundation.*

A fully-sponsored VIP experience at the hospitality industry conference; open to hospitality management students, chosen by programs based on each school’s own criteria.

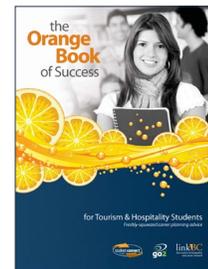
## StudentConnect Resources

We continued to deliver our Orange Book of Success workshop to students (450 reached) and shared the Orange Book for Employers at industry events and through partner organizations.

for Employers



for Students



# Overall grade: **A**

*Respondents continue to give LinkBC high marks in this category, with most rating StudentConnect as useful to very useful (average 4 out of 5). Of note is a lack of familiarity with Project Change and the Employers Orange Book, to be addressed in the communications plan.*

## Next year (2013/2014):

- **Work towards a Mega Rendezvous** incorporating more employers, diverse sectors (e.g. adventure and culinary) and focusing on peer-to-peer networking (potential to include secondary students).
- **Continue to deliver the Provincial Case Competition** using the industry-focused “pick-a-case” format. Work on: stronger enforcement of rules, on-site meal, detailed itineraries for all participants, and higher quality media (team photos and videos in competition rooms).
- **Continue Project Change** as a year-long competition; increase awareness amongst all stakeholder groups.
- **Launch the LinkBC Alumni Association**, providing better tracking of graduates, more networking, and more inter-student support.
- **Continue with Orange Book efforts:** explore a student video to increase reach; step up promotion and distribution of employer book.

Promote BC as a tourism learning destination, generating new economic benefits for communities, and attracting quality students to our programs.

### New marketing plan

To be launched in June 2013, this includes the development a new student experience platform at [www.studytourism-in-bc.ca](http://www.studytourism-in-bc.ca) including blogs and other Search Engine Optimization (SEO)-friendly components, a new brand and logo suite, collateral, and social media strategy.

The plan will address declining visitation to the existing site, which is not indexable by Google or other search engines (it's 6 years old). Due to lack of SEO, visitation dropped by 50%, with Canada (63%), China (7%), and Belgium (4%) representing the majority of visitation.

### Working with DMOs

We continued to promote our site with Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) partners Kootenay Rockies Tourism, and additional regional DMOs Vancouver Coast and Mountains and Thompson Okanagan Tourism.

## Overall grade: B

*The creation of the marketing plan is a promising first step: initial conversations have increased familiarity with this initiative amongst our education providers to 75% of respondents. The implementation of the plan is now a top priority for LinkBC over the next 12 months.*

## Next year (2013/2014)

full  
Marketing  
Plan



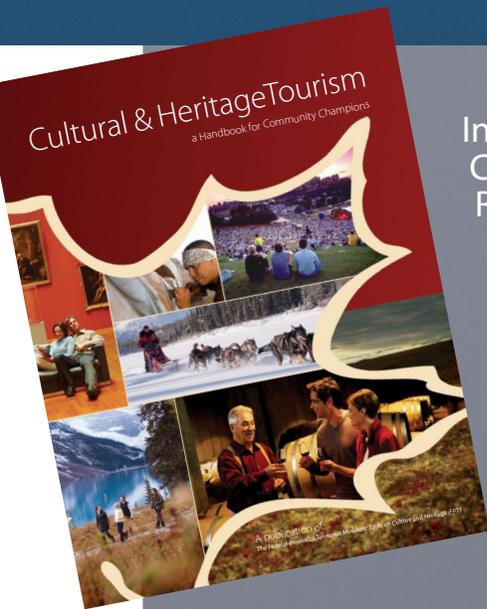
- **Present the marketing plan** at the 2013 Tourism Educators Conference.
- **Launch new portal** at [www.studytourism-in-bc.ca](http://www.studytourism-in-bc.ca). Target: double unique visitors in the first six months.
- **Continue to build strategic partnerships** with destination marketers, organizations such as Hostel International, Scouts Canada, and private companies (tour operators, etc.) in order to drive traffic to the site.
- **Launch domestic and international social media strategy** and incorporate contests ("tell us why you study tourism in BC and you could win a trip to Tofino!").
- **Enlist student support** for increasing quality enrolment through a "refer a friend" program.
- **Create and market a secure database** of volunteer and work experience (co-op, practicum) opportunities on the site. This was rated as a top priority by student respondents in our survey, and dovetails with StudentConnect.

Cayman MacPhee, gold medal winning chef from the Okanagan College culinary arts program.



### 3

Gather and share tourism knowledge and resources as the hub of a tourism information network.



#### Industry-Led Classroom Resources

LinkBC managed a national guidebook for Cultural Heritage Tourism development.

#### Promotion of PD Events and Opportunities

Shared updates about the Tourism Educators Conference and other faculty professional development (PD) events.

#### WorldHost agreement

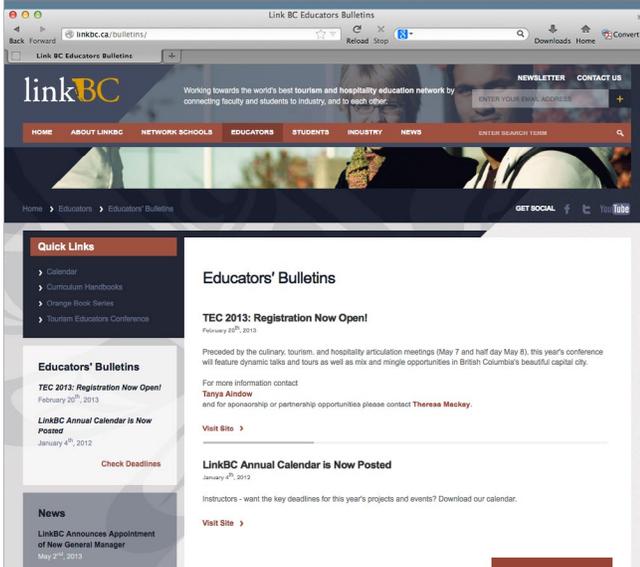
Continued to work with WorldHost and AtBC towards cross-promotional marketing (e.g. marketing tourism programs at WorldHost sessions); strengthening and delivery of WorldHost and FirstHost programs.

#### Tourism Online Resource Centre (TORC)

Continued to explore a new website concept, the Portal for Online Resources in Tourism (PORT), to replace TORC. This included partnership conversations, a site proposal and rough cost estimates, and several student research projects designed to inform development.

#### State of the System Report

Supported the creation of a draft 'state of the system' report (written by the tourism educators task force), which will form the basis of an action plan at the 2013 Tourism Educators Conference.



## Overall grade: C+

*2012 continued to be a foundation development year for the online resource centre, which was seen to be of value to 73% of respondents. The same proportion of respondents indicated Link-BC could play a useful role in supporting curriculum development. Further conversations around these topics at the Tourism Educators Conference will help set direction for the next year.*

### Next year:

- **Share PORT site concepts** with stakeholders, invite feedback.
- **Explore** ways LinkBC can support curriculum development.
- **Provide promotional support** for Tourism Educators Conference, Rural Tourism Conference, and other PD opportunities.
- **Engage** in additional 'real world' resource development as projects arise and are vetted by LinkBC advisory board.

# 4

Communicate with and engage stakeholders so our widely dispersed network remains connected, and celebrates achievements.

## LinkBC.ca website

The new linkbc.ca attracts about 100 unique visitors monthly.

## E-newsletters and Social Media

Our monthly e-newsletter continues to reach 800+ subscribers from the tourism and education communities, with open rates consistently higher than industry average. Our Facebook pages received increased traffic (LinkBC: 35% increase, Project Change: 43% increase) and our twitter followers jumped to 548 (50% increase) and counting.

## Presentations to Students

We continued to deliver presentations to hundreds of new students across the province.

## Annual Report Card (you're reading it!)

Released a report to update stakeholders on our performance against elements of our strategic plan. Conducted an annual stakeholder survey to inform the plan.

## Advisory Board

We held an independently-facilitated board workshop in November of 2012 which saw the development of clearer policies, and the creation of a board elections process. This was piloted for the election of Amy Frew, our new "Graduate/Industry Representative."



Amy Frew, LinkBC's newest board member

# Overall grade: B

While the launch of the marketing plan should help separate and target key audiences next year, awareness remains an issue for many respondents. Helpful suggestions included: presentations to more students and faculty, raising LinkBC's profile with individual operators and at all levels of organizations, and clarification of mandate.

## Next year:

- **Create further separation** between 'corporate' LinkBC communications and students and alumni through the Study Tourism in BC marketing efforts.
- **Develop stronger followings** in delineated newsletters for target groups and clarify web messages and collateral where needed.
- **Increase awareness of Project Change** (32% of survey respondents not familiar at all) and Orange Book for Employers (32% unaware). Increase distribution of annual report card (30% not familiar) and consider alternate format (currently only printed and PDF).
- **Conduct more school presentations**, early in the school year (in direct response to survey results).
- **Reach out** to associations and individual businesses and market LinkBC services (work experience and volunteer listings, etc.).
- **Increase social media efforts**, create and distribute hashtags ahead of events for better tracking.
- **Increase efforts** to promote traffic to LinkBC.ca .





“ LinkBC is a vital connection for the Tourism and Recreation Management Program at COTR, ensuring our program is current and relevant to the industry. Through initiatives such as the *Case Competition*, *Orange Book* and *Project Change*, students have the opportunity to showcase their skills to prospective employers before, during, and after completion of their respective programs. ”

*Grant Unger, College of the Rockies (COTR)*

## LinkBC by the numbers 2011/2012:

- **Over 500 students** and employers connected at Rendezvous (student attendance up 20%).
- **Over \$60,000** in support for students raised by LinkBC in the form of registration fees, cash and prizes, hotel room nights, meals, and conference facilities.
- **28 teams** raised thousands of dollars, donated clothing items, saved energy and resources, fed the homeless, and raised awareness for causes through Project Change (100+ students, 65% increase).
- **15 teams** showed their skills at the Case Competition and attended the HOST 2012 Conference (60 students, 76% increase).
- **\$13,000 in scholarships** facilitated by LinkBC.
- **450 Orange Books** were used by students to direct their career planning.
- **70 volunteer positions** directly filled by network students.

“ *The BC Hospitality Foundation (BCHF) is pleased with its continued relationship with LinkBC to identify the Future Leaders in our industry. LinkBC plays an important role in the success of the Foundation's scholarship program and forms an integral part of the provincial hospitality landscape.* ”

*-Alan Sacks, Executive Director, BCHF*

# Thank You!

LinkBC thanks Destination BC for their continued financial contribution; Capilano University, our provincial host institution; and all our colleagues at LinkBC network institutions for your ongoing support.