

NEWS ADVISORY / RELEASE

Editors: **Photo opportunity**
SIAST Kelsey Campus
Chem Tech Lab, Room No. 205.1
March 7, 2007
1 to 1:45 p.m.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Program prepares Aboriginal students for chemical technology careers

Training begins in La Ronge, wraps up in Saskatoon

Saskatoon – March 7, 2007 – A joint initiative between SIAST, Northlands Regional College and the Saskatchewan Research Council (SRC) is providing a group of Aboriginal students from northern Saskatchewan with a unique opportunity to explore education and career opportunities in chemical technology.

The students, who are visiting SIAST Kelsey Campus today, are taking part in Chemical Laboratory Technician programming through Northlands College in La Ronge. The program is the equivalent of the first year of SIAST's two-year Chemical Technology program. During the first year of studies, the students will be offered summer employment in Saskatoon by SRC. At the end of their first year, they return to Saskatoon to complete SIAST's Chemical Technology diploma program.

"This partnership offers a triple win," says Judy Layne, SIAST's dean of Science and Health. "It expands access to post-secondary education, increases the potential for success by enabling students to pursue their education closer to home, and provides the opportunity for more expansive workplace experience." With Michael Weekes, SRC's vice president, environment and forestry, Layne is hosting a lunch for the students at SIAST Kelsey Campus today.

"SRC is pleased to be associated with this program," says Weekes. "It marks a milestone for us and fills a void that has existed for many years in the educational options available to northern Aboriginal students. It is consistent with SRC's ongoing commitment to create quality jobs in Saskatchewan."

The afternoon's agenda includes a tour of SIAST's Chem Tech laboratories and a presentation by staff from the campus's Aboriginal activity centre.

Salim Khalid, SIAST's Chemical Technology program head, says the partnership between Northlands College, SRC and SIAST provides valuable social and economic support to students as they expand their marketable skills. He credits SRC with putting the idea forward, and Northlands with playing a critical role in the recruitment and early preparation of students.

SIAST's Chemical Technology program prepares grads for employment in research, production and laboratory work in such areas as mining, occupational health, environmental protection, the petroleum industry, pulp and paper production, and food processing. Graduates can apply for entry into the third-year of bachelor of science programs at the University of Regina and Royal Roads University.

SIAST is Saskatchewan's primary public institution for post-secondary technical education and skills training, recognized nationally and internationally for its expertise and innovation. More than 12,000 students are registered in SIAST programs, which touch every sector of the economy; additionally, the organization draws more than 28,000 individual course registrations. It operates campuses in Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, Regina and Saskatoon, and provides a number of courses and programs through distance education.

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Additional information about SIAST can be found at www.goSIAST.com.