

Willis College President Invited to Present the TeKnoWave Initiative at [AFN-NEXUS 2002](#) and International UNESCO Conferences

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Ms. Rima Aristocrat, President & CEO of 106-year old Ottawa-based Willis College of Business & Technology, will present the groundbreaking "TeKnoWave" initiative at the [AFN-NEXUS 2002 National Chiefs of Canada General Assembly and Conference](#) held July 16 - 18, 2002 at the Kahnawake Mohawk Territory near Montreal, Quebec.

The presentation will also be given at UNESCO UNEVOC-Canada's International Conference "Developing Skills for the New Economy" held October 17-19, 2002 in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The presentation will describe the various elements of TeKnoWave, a unique and exemplary innovative Aboriginal technology training program that is backed by both private and public sectors. Aristocrat will also outline how the TeKnoWave model can be adapted to the needs of other countries, communities and industrial sectors.

Aristocrat believes that by training 1000 Aboriginal IT experts, a number of very positive outcomes will be realized. "These trained individuals will develop and contribute \$10 million in technology applications for their communities and will form a strong foundation for Canada's Aboriginal Technology capacity.

Canada is currently facing a national crisis given that the Aboriginal youth population is growing 1.4 times faster than the non-Aboriginal population and the unemployment rate for Canadian Aboriginal people is double the national average. A key recommendation from The National Connecting Aboriginal Canadians Forum held on May 9, 2002 was that all federal, provincial, territorial and community stakeholders begin to work together to ensure that: Adequate and targeted e-skills training is provided for Aboriginal peoples located in urban, rural and remote communities. Without these basic and advanced e-skills, the new economy and technological transformation will be closed to Canada's Aboriginal people.

"It is clear that access to higher education is an essential ingredient to the economic, social and cultural development of Canada's First Nations, Metis and Inuit communities," said Aristocrat. TeKnoWave, based on the successful model developed by Willis College, is a culturally adapted program and directly responds to the national crisis, recognized by business and government leaders attending the unprecedented Taking Pulse forum in Calgary, to increase the participation of Aboriginal peoples in the Canadian workforce.

Once graduated from the program, Aboriginal students would become involved in technology-oriented career paths that would advance personal growth and self-esteem but also establish such people as role models for other members of their community. The students not only participate in community-based internship projects, but they will have the choice of either becoming part of corporate Canada or returning to their communities to initiate new projects and training that would ultimately broaden the long-term impact of this initial program. The timely implementation of TeKnoWave will serve as a launch pad for many other sector programs with similar missions. It will allow Aboriginal communities to embrace the future while still respecting their cultural heritage.

Aristocrat gratefully acknowledges the tremendous support from Aboriginal leaders, which have enabled Willis College to partner with academic, corporate, community and government sectors and establish Canada's first national training program to build Aboriginal Capacity in Information Technology: "Inspired leaders like John Bernard, President of Donna Cona, Grand Chief Joseph Norton, Kahnawake Mohawk Territory and John Kim Bell, Founder and President of the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation have all been instrumental in guiding this initiative."

TeKnoWave pilot programs will be implemented at the Odawa Native Friendship Centre in Ottawa and Kahnawake Mohawk Territory near Montreal this upcoming autumn.

About Willis College

Willis College of Business and Technology is acutely aware of, and responsive to, this era of technological advancement. As an

educational institute with a reputation of excellence that spans over 100 years, the College is not mired in the past but rather moving boldly into the future with cutting edge technology programs that are second to none. Willis graduates are the only ones in Canada to receive a Ministry of Education approved diploma, university degree credits and industry certification. Willis College is proud to be a key partner with the University of Winnipeg in the first inter-provincial articulation between private and public education systems in Canada.

Beyond its award winning educational programs, Willis College is committed to building a lasting and mutually rewarding relationship with the Aboriginal peoples of Canada through both local community involvement and national initiatives. Willis College is proud to be one of the first educational institutes to recognize our country's heritage with the establishment of a full tuition scholarship, named in honour of Grand Chief Joseph T. Norton, awarded annually to a Canadian Aboriginal student.

For more information contact: John Leggitt Director of Operations
Willis College of Business & Technology (613) 233-1128
www.williscollege.com www.teknowave.ca