



PACIFIC COAST
UNIVERSITY
FOR WORKPLACE HEALTH SCIENCES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Pacific Coast University for Workplace Health Sciences (PCU-WHS)
Welcomes First Students**

*New Not-For-Profit University Poised to Become Leading Global Educator
In Workplace Health Science*

Port Alberni, British Columbia – September 25th, 2014 – Fifteen months after signing a ground breaking memorandum of understanding with the International Social Security Association (ISSA), [Pacific Coast University for Workplace Health Sciences](http://www.pcu-whs.ca) (PCU-WHS) today launched an innovative educational program as the first of its kind degree-granting institution dedicated to all aspects of Workplace Health Sciences.

PCU-WHS offers the world's only Bachelors in Disability Management, as well as continuing education programs and advanced level training courses.

"Today represents a milestone that was ten years in the making and made possible by broad support across all stakeholder groups including government, labour and industry. This was truly an inclusive undertaking," said Wolfgang Zimmermann, PCU-WHS University President. "I am excited that this collaborative effort will deliver a world class degree program that empowers our graduates to make a significant contribution to reducing the socio-economic impact of disabling conditions on workers, employers and society at large."

The new not-for-profit University was established with the expertise and knowledge of leading edge academics, professionals and practitioners from around the world in the field of Disability Management. Its goal is to develop into high value Canadian and international education and research institution that will disseminate new knowledge in all aspects of Workplace Health.

For Zimmermann, the official launch of PCU-WHS is deeply personal.

37 years ago, he was working for MacMillan Bloedel in Port Alberni as a logger when a tree fell on him, breaking his back and eventually leaving him in a wheelchair. After a brief period of rehabilitation and retraining as an accountant, Zimmermann was back on the job but quickly realized the concept of return-to-work, particularly with a severe injury, was unheard of.

The tragedy motivated him to work collaboratively with governments, labour and industry to promote the positive impacts of effective Disability Management programs, paving the way to the development of a University of higher education in Workplace Health Sciences.



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"I was fortunate then to have the support of my company and union to carry on working, and am grateful that we are now able to train dedicated professionals in a specialized University so there are better outcomes for all workers disabled by injury or illness," Zimmermann said. "With rising awareness of the benefits of Disability Management programs, our graduates will have unparalleled access to a broad range of rewarding career opportunities."

The new not-for-profit University is based in the historically rich Vancouver Island town of Port Alberni a former mainstay of British Columbia's Forest industry and the gateway to the world renowned Pacific Rim National Park Reserve.

About Pacific Coast University For Workplace Health Sciences

Pacific Coast University for Workplace Health Sciences is a statutory not-for-profit post-secondary degree granting education and research institution for the special purpose of creating and disseminating new knowledge including applied research in the fields of return to work and disability management, workplace safety, health promotion, comprehensive rehabilitation and disability leadership studies. The University was established by the unanimous legislative consent of the Province of British Columbia with capital construction provided through the Government of Canada and a significant land donation by the City of Port Alberni in British Columbia. With the cooperation of government leaders and partnerships among labour and industry worldwide, Pacific Coast University for Workplace Health Sciences is uniquely poised for success and offers a truly global education. The University is committed to excellence in teaching and research, scholarship, and service to the broader community. For more information, visit <http://www.pcu-whs.ca>.

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