

Indo-Canadian Cultural Centre



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Amidst all the construction on the campus and whining about parking, you may have heard something else. No, it wasn't any plan A, plan B, or plan H but it was the new Indo-Canadian Cultural Centre. The grand opening ribbon-cutting event happened on Saturday October 28 along with a fundraising dinner and much promise.

Abbotsford currently has the largest proportion of Indo-Canadians in Canada and this development was significant for the Indo-Canadian community. As well as satisfying community needs this was a big project for the future because "Canada's rapidly growing communities of people of Indian descent are crucial to the economic, cultural, social, and political spheres of our province". In addition, the province's "economy is fuelled, in part, by the trade and industry of our South Asian populations" so this will help continue the positive growing trend.

Many new encouraging opportunities for students and faculty are emerging from this centre: for example, more exchanges with India, increased co-op chances in India and Canada, more career opportunities in many areas, as well as more credibility to UCFV as a research university. This new addition will also help to break

barriers to social integration and economic integration. Skip Bassford has been on board with this idea since it started and describes the school as being "totally committed" to it.

Newly chosen Centre Director Satwinder Bains further believes this can become a positive foundation for all and will be a success. Bains commented that "people don't give money to causes they don't believe in, and due to the strong showing of financial support it is a real indication that the community believes in the potential for UCFV" to grow as a leader in Indo-Canadian studies.

A peer also optimistically reiterated that the centre will be a success because of Bains' interest in "cross-cultural community development" and her "incredible amount of energy and leadership" (UCFV Research Dean Yvon Dandurand). Furthermore, Bains brings more than just an immaculate reputation to the table but experience of a "20 year work and volunteer history in the Fraser Valley" as well as many grassroots connections in the community.

Support for these studies has not only come from the local Indo-Canadian community but also internationally in Chandigarh, India where a UCFV degree program is being offered. All of these groups hope the new Centre will have much success and create many new benefits for students as well as the community.