

Sask. Polytech, IMII create Minerals Innovation centre (with video)

BY SCOTT LARSON, THE STARPHOENIX NOVEMBER 17, 2014



Cristal Glass-Painchaud, director of the Centre for Minerals Innovation. (photo courtesy Saskatchewan Polytechnic)

Saskatchewan Polytechnic and International Minerals Innovation Institute (IMII) have partnered to launch the Centre for Minerals Innovation which will co-ordinate the ongoing training needs in the mining industry and maintain an inventory of training programs.

Cristal Glass-Painchaud, the centre's director, said in the next 18 months the centre will develop a curriculum in four areas: Standardization of safety training across the province for the mining industry, leadership and management related training, investing in soft rock training simulators and the creation of an introductory mining program in partnership with Northlands College.

"By the end of the two years we hope to have all four projects operating," Glass-Painchaud said.

IMII is providing the \$500,000 seed money to get the centre up and running.

"The centre will have a comprehensive inventory of all the pertinent educational and training programs

available at Saskatchewan Polytechnic, facilitate developing new programs, updating existing programs and ensuring that the most up-to-date programs are available for students,” said Engin Ozberk, executive director and senior technical adviser at IMII.

Ozberk said the centre will benefit both students, employees and industry.

“It is for the education of young people to be able to give them opportunities to gain a wide range of skills and better jobs with higher pay,” he said, “While for the minerals industry they gain skilled human resources and to enhance the economy of the province, the region and our country.”

The project is one of eight IMII is rolling out this year. The projects focus on safety, environment and developing specialized training in the mining industry.

IMII is an industry-government-education and research institutions partnership that is jointly funded by industry and government. It helps develop industry-driven education and training programs to address the labour force needs in the mining and minerals sector.

Glass-Painchaud said courses could range from a half-day for a certain safety course up to a 12-week program.

“And our demographics for students is everyone from those right out of high school to people who are working in the industry and need to get an upgrade.”

Larry Rosia, Sask Polytech president and CEO, said the mining industry accounts for more than 30,000 jobs in the province and there is a greater demand for training and safety.

“The new Centre for Minerals Innovation will help ensure the sector access to leading-edge educational services, when and where they’re needed,” Rosia said.