

## VIU grad named national Aboriginal Ambassador

VIU grad Carol Bob is one of Canada's Aboriginal Ambassadors. She'll spend part of the summer and fall getting young people excited about science.

Vancouver Island University graduate Carol Bob is on a roll.

She is one of two recipients of a \$5,000 Aboriginal Ambassador award from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC).

Earlier this year, NSERC awarded Bob with her third prestigious Undergraduate Student Research Award in chemistry, valued at \$4,500 and handed out to Canada's most promising student researchers.

"I feel extremely honoured," said Bob, who is working in VIU's Department of Chemistry's Applied Environmental Research Laboratory at the Nanaimo campus.

As a national Aboriginal Ambassador, Bob will spend part of the summer and early fall traveling to Aboriginal communities in Alert Bay, Haida Gwaii (Queen Charlotte Islands), and Kincome Inlet (north of Powell River) to motivate and inspire young people to get excited about science.

"I'll continue outreach projects I began a few years ago as a VIU student," Bob explained. "I'll lead beach activities for small groups of kids, ages 12 to 16, and conduct beach surveys to get an idea of all the different kinds of animals that live there. My goal is to help them develop an appreciation for species diversity on our beaches, and excite them about science. We'll be digging in the sand, looking at crabs and other animals. Some of these kids have never done this type of activity before. This will give me a chance to describe some of the work that I have been involved with at VIU isolating molecules that some of these organisms use to communicate."

Bob will also work with children in the community of Kispiox, near Hazelton. "They don't live near the ocean, so I'll take them to local rivers to discuss water quality and the Didymo species, an invasion fresh water algae that I'm currently researching," said Bob. "The experience will introduce the kids to sampling techniques, water quality parameters and chemical analysis. Hopefully this will spark their interest in science."

Bob, originally from the Nanoose First Nations or Snaw-Naw-As, hopes to be the kind of mentor her young charges will remember long into the future.

"In high school, I was scared of sciences," said Bob. "If I'd had a mentor who took the time to engage me in science, I probably would have pursued university studies 25 years earlier." Bob returned to university as a mature student. She graduated with a Bachelor of Fisheries and Aquaculture degree last June.

The Aboriginal Ambassador supplement aims to engage Aboriginal students in promoting interest and participation in the natural sciences and engineering by having them visit Canada's Aboriginal communities and schools and sharing their research and education experiences or participating in science promotion events and activities.



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