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**For immediate Release**

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### **UBC wins FuturEd Award for Futurist Use of e-Learning**

FuturEd - Canada's education futurist consulting firm - is pleased to present the 2003 AMTEC Award to UBC Distance Education and Technology and Telestudios.

In the past, Forest Ecology at UBC was taught on-campus with a laboratory component of the course that involved an ecology walk through Pacific Spirit Park (PSP). However, it is difficult for Distance Education learners, who are taking the online version on Forest Ecology, to travel to campus to attend the laboratory component of the course. Therefore, the instructional design team at UBC Distance Education and Technology (DE&T) recreated the PSP walk virtually, in order to provide this learning experience.

The virtual tour through PSP is led and narrated by the *distinguished* Dr. Hamish Kimmins of the UBC Faculty of Forestry who is **a world-renowned forest ecologist** and the course content expert. It was felt that as Dr. Kimmins approaches his retirement this year, that the course will become part of his teaching legacy, as he can continue to instruct virtually for a number of years after his official retirement. Online learners will have continued access to one of Canada's most eminent forest ecology scientists.

In addition to the Forest Ecology on-line course, UBC Distance Education and Technology (DE&T) offers nearly 120 credit courses of which 70 are delivered entirely online over the web using WebCT. In the design, development and delivery of online courses, instructional designers at DE&T make a serious effort to take advantage of what is/may be possible with online technologies to enhance the learning experience of the online learners. These technologies are used to build supportive learning environments by creating online learning communities with two-way communication between learners and learners, learners and instructors and also through discussion groups, collaborative assignments and chat rooms.

UBC Distance Education and Technology and Telestudios is the second recipient of the FuturEd Award for demonstrating unique and innovative use of learning technologies to change learning systems. On May 26 in Montreal, UBC was announced as the winner of the FuturEd AMTEC (Association for Media and Technology in Education in Canada) Award at their annual conference. At a special ceremony September 26 at UBC, Dr. Kathryn Barker, founder and president of FuturEd™ Inc. will present Chris Crowley, Rick Kenny and Mark Zuberbuhler with a plaque created by artist Joanie McCorry, from Mayne Island, the home office of FuturEd™ Inc.

Dr. Barker developed the Award to encourage ongoing implementation of new technologies for learning. "It's a privilege to be associated with imaginative educators like the folks at the UBC Distance Education and Technology and Telestudios" Dr. Barker said.

FuturEd™ Consulting Education Futurists Inc. is a consulting firm that conducts research and development in the education industry. FuturEd focuses on innovations and quality assurance in education and training, and provides tools to promote consumer protection. Founded in 1995 and based in Vancouver, B.C., FuturEd is committed to improving learning systems in the future for the future.

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