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## Honourable Seamus O'Regan Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence Visits PCU-WHS Campus

News Release: August 21, 2018

Pacific Coast University for Workplace Health Sciences (PCU-WHS) was most pleased to host the Honourable Seamus O' Regan, Canada's Federal Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence at its campus today.



Faculty and staff of PCU-WHS had the privilege today of hosting the Honourable Seamus O' Regan, who was accompanied by key staff members, and Gord Johns, Federal Member of Parliament for Courtenay-Alberni (including the riding in which PCU-WHS is located), on both a facility and program tour of the University. The Minister was very interested to learn more about the broader area of Return to Work / Disability Management, both in Canada and around the world, as well as gain some understanding of the University's academic and continuing education programming.

PCU-WHS Chief Academic Officer, Dr. Donal McAnaney, explained in detail not only the concept of Disability Management but also its importance as an effective workplace strategy in maintaining equitable participation in the workforce for individuals who acquire a mental or physical health

impairment. More than 80 percent of impairments occur during an individual's working life, and as a result, they may be at risk of losing their employment and all too often are pushed to the margins of society with many suffering the corollary of poverty, addiction and sometimes suicide.

The Minister's visit was facilitated through the active support of MP Gord Johns who, as Veteran Affairs Critic, has gained a deep understanding of the many challenges facing disabled Veterans and stated, "I greatly appreciate the Minister taking the time to come to Port Alberni today to learn about this unique University and its global network in Return to Work / Disability Management. Disabled Veterans with mental and physical health impairments face unique challenges when attempting to re-enter the workforce. PCU-WHS offers specialized programs, and employs uniquely talented and dedicated staff that can help support Veterans find meaningful employment outside the military. In this way, by supporting PCU-WHS, we create benefits for everybody involved."

The Minister was also provided with an overview of the professional competency framework in Return to Work / Disability Management, adopted by an increasing number of organizations across Canada and internationally (28 countries currently involved) in addition to being referenced as global best practice by the International Social Security Association's (UN affiliated agency in Geneva) best practice Guidelines on Return to Work and Reintegration.

*Photo L to R: MP Gord Johns, Wolfgang Zimmermann, President PCU-WHS, and the Honourable Seamus O'Regan, Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Deputy Minister of National Defence*