

NVCC COMES BIG TIME TO RESTON

By William Nicoson

From the cover of the Spring 2005 course catalogue freshly published by the Loudoun Campus of Northern Virginia Community College, I never expected to find 138 courses scheduled to be taught in Reston. The cover lists campuses in Alexandria, Annandale, Loudoun, Manassas, Springfield (called "Medical Education") and Woodbridge. No reference is made on the cover to Fairfax County or to Reston.

In prior years NVCC (NOVA to some) has maintained a few classrooms on the first floor of the SCS Building across Roger Bacon Drive from McDonald's Restaurant. Now reliable sources tell me NVCC plans to take over the entire first floor except for the Millennium Bank space. Classrooms may swell to about 25,000 square feet. McDonald's should also consider expanding to serve all the hungry scholars about to convene across the street.

NVCC's space in the SCS Building is referred to as "Reston Lab" in the course catalogue. This is consistent with the technological nature of most courses scheduled to be taught in Reston. If you're anxious to learn about computerized billing and coding for medical insurance (4 sessions for \$300), or the ins and outs of Microsoft Word, Excel or Powerpoint (each 2 sessions for \$195), or digital photography (Level I, 4 sessions at \$400; Level II, 5 sessions at \$400), or digital video (Level I, 2 sessions for \$225; Level II, 4 sessions for \$500), Flash introduction or advanced web design (each 4 sessions at \$445), managing sound for multimedia and web (one session at \$125), web site user interface (2 sessions at \$245), CGI scripting using perl (2 sessions for \$345), java servlets (1 session for \$220), Red Hat Linux core system admin (4 sessions for \$499), Cisco routers (2 sessions for \$495) and on and on.

Why is learning about Cisco so much more expensive than other subjects? Don't ask me. I should disclose that I own some Cisco shares, but I haven't the foggiest notion what its routers do.

It's obvious to me that I need a lot of education just to figure out what I don't know but should know about the computer and the internet. The only trouble with the NVCC offerings in Reston is their richness and diversity. I feel like the proverbial kid at the candy store window.

The emphasis on technology in the 2005 catalogue of courses available at the Loudoun campus and the Reston Lab might reflect the special interests of NVCC President Robert G. Templin, Jr. Before his appointment to head NVCC, he served as president of Virginia's Center for Innovative Technology.

Templin also knows Reston well. I first met him as one of the scholars offering intellectual stimulation at the Marino Institute in Reston. In an interview published a month ago in The Washington Post, Templin expressed a preference for new teaching facilities near future metro

rail stations. In that context, the SCS building just off Wiehle Avenue makes perfect sense since the Wiehle Avenue station being planned will be an easy walk from the Reston Lab.

NVCC is the largest institution of higher learning in Virginia. In 2004 it had about 63,000 students studying on 6 campuses. Early in 2005 when the Reston Lab comes on line, the student population will likely grow by at least another 2,000. Over the next ten years Templin has predicted NVCC will add a couple of campuses and about 25,000 more students.

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