

# National Skilled Trades and Technology Week Official Launch Spokespeople, November 5

Please visit the Media Registration desk (located in the Automotive Building NE18, booth 24, at the British Columbia Institute of Technology) or contact Michèle at: [micheler@skillscanada.com](mailto:micheler@skillscanada.com), or call 613-266-4771 to arrange for an interview or photo opportunity.

Select spokespeople are available to take part in French interviews.



## **Karen Creditor, President, Skills/Compétences Canada**

Karen Creditor is currently the President and CEO of Ontario College Application Service (OCAS) — a not-for-profit member organization of Ontario’s colleges and a provider of centralized technology-supported services in the higher education sector. Her work within the organization is informed by her background in both education and technology, including leadership positions at prestigious firms Cap Gemini Consulting, Peabody Energy, and Research in Motion and over a decade of teaching experience at three respected academic institutions — St. Louis Community College, Washington University in St. Louis, and Conestoga College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning. Karen is a recognized champion for the innovation and forward-thinking that continues to reinvent higher education. In addition to her work with OCAS and alongside this new appointment, her vision and breadth of experience have led her to positions on a number of boards and committees, including board president / chair of Skills Ontario and member of the board for the Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer. A frequently sought-after speaker and panelist, Karen is an advocate for women in industry, trades, and technology, and a vocal supporter of the need to create space for all learners to thrive.



## **Shaun Thorson, Chief Executive Officer, Skills/Compétences Canada (SCC)**

Shaun Thorson, Chief Executive Officer of SCC, is a tireless champion of skilled trade and technology careers for Canadian youth. The CEO since 2006, Shaun has held various positions within the Skills/Compétences Canada organization at the provincial and national levels for the past 25 years.

Shaun recognizes the vital role of a strong and vibrant skilled trade and technology workforce in maintaining Canada’s global economic leadership and fosters engagement with thought-leaders to ensure best practices and positioning. Known for the annual Skills Canada National Competition, Skills Canada is also member of WorldSkills. Within this international body Shaun has chaired the Sustainability Initiatives, Quality Assurance Management Council, the WorldSkills Americas Technical Committee and was Canada’s WorldSkills Technical Delegate from 2006 to 2013 and in 2017. Shaun is the Past President of the CWB Welding Foundation and Chairs the WorldSkills, CEO-National Skills Organization Council.



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## Jack Dupuis, Skills/Compétences Canada Alumni and Silver Medalist in Heavy Vehicle Technology at WorldSkills Kazan 2019

Jack is currently studying at the *Centre de formation en mécanique de véhicules lourds* and works for Audet and Knight in Val-Alain, Québec. He chose to work in a skilled trade because he wants to be more active than just sitting in an office. Jack has always had a passion for machines and mechanics, and he wants to build a career in that field. His ambition is to start his own business with a mobile diesel mechanics unit to repair different machines on site.



He heard about the skills competitions at his training centre and decided to find out more. When he learned that there was not only a Skills Canada National Competition (SCNC) but also a WorldSkills Competition, he knew that he wanted to be part of this great adventure. Jack won a gold medal at SCNC Edmonton 2018 where he qualified for the WorldSkills Team Canada Selection Event and placed first. This earned him a spot on WorldSkills Team Canada 2019 and gave him the opportunity to compete at WorldSkills Kazan 2019. At the WorldSkills Competition, he proudly earned a silver medal!

The person who has inspired him the most is his father as he has learned a lot from him. When he was growing up, he spent a lot of time working with him and asking lots of questions. Jack's father always took time to explain things to him and he truly believes his advice has helped him get to where he is today.

## Clarissa Roque, Skills/Compétences Canada Alumni and Recipient of a Medallion of Excellence in Pâtisserie & Confectionery at WorldSkills Kazan 2019

Clarissa is currently attending Vancouver Community College and working at Chez Christophe Chocolaterie Pâtisserie in Vancouver, British Columbia. She has aspired to be a pastry chef ever since she was a little girl. She's always had a sweet tooth and enjoyed eating raw cookie dough and confetti cakes, which made her fall in love with the craft. In the future, she would love to work abroad, expanding her knowledge of pastry and eventually, she plans to open her own business.



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In tenth grade, she first participated at a Skills Canada British Columbia Provincial Competition and won. She went on to participate at the 2015 Skills Canada National Competition (SCNC), in Saskatoon where she received the gold medal, however, she did not qualify for the WorldSkills Competition. She competed in baking the following two SCNCs where the outcome left her disappointed as she did not win. This definitely pushed her to work harder and at SCNC Edmonton 2018 she qualified for the chance to compete at the WorldSkills Competition. She was successful at the WorldSkills Team Canada Selection Event which earned her a spot on WorldSkills Team Canada 2019 who went on to compete at the 45<sup>th</sup> WorldSkills Competition, in Kazan. At WorldSkills Kazan 2019, Clarissa won a Medallion of Excellence in Pâtisserie and Confectionery.

Her biggest inspiration is her sister Patricia Roque. In 2015, Patricia competed in Fashion Technology in São Paulo, Brazil at the 43rd WorldSkills Competition and earned a Medallion for Excellence. She was only 17 years old at the time. Clarissa admires her sister's passion and dedication for her craft.

## **Farnaz Riahi, Chief Financial Officer, Industry Training Authority**

Farnaz Riahi is Chief Financial Officer (CFO) for the Industry Training Authority (ITA). She is responsible for providing corporate support to the organization including annual planning, finance, procurement, human resources, technology support, risk mitigation, facilities and related corporate services. Farnaz has over 12 years of experience in senior financial management roles in both the public and private sector. Farnaz started her career as a Staff Accountant at Ernst & Young and later worked as the Director of Planning & Analysis at Corus Entertainment, and was the Vice President of Finance at Channel M (now Omni Media). Before accepting the role at ITA, she was Vice President of Finance at Canada Wide Media Limited. Farnaz holds a Bachelor of Commerce from the University of Toronto and is a designated Chartered Accountant (CPA, CA).



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## **Dr. Tom Roemer, Vice-President, Academic, British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT)**

Dr. Roemer is Vice-President, Academic, at the British Columbia Institute of Technology. He is responsible for providing academic vision at the Institute and leadership in the educational, international, indigenous and applied research portfolios. Previously, he developed production control software and data solutions for corporate clients.

Tom holds a master's degree in astrophysics, a doctorate in Educational Leadership, and various professional certificates from the University of California. He has adjunct professor status at Simon Fraser University, and specializes in global technical-vocational education frameworks.



## **Industry Partners, Sponsors and Suppliers**

Industry representatives working with Skills/Compétences Canada to make National Skilled Trades and Technology Week possible are on hand to discuss skilled trades opportunities, needs and issues related to their sectors.