



MEDIA RELEASE

**LOCAL EMPLOYERS PYTHIAN AND ALGONQUIN COLLEGE RECOGNIZED
AT THE 2012 EMPLOYER COUNCIL OF CHAMPIONS SUMMIT**

Wednesday, March 7, 2012, Ottawa – Hire Immigrants Ottawa and the Employer Council of Champions (ECC) presented Pythian and Algonquin College with Employer Excellence Awards today at the 2012 Employer Council of Champions (ECC) Summit.

Pythian, a remote database and consulting services company, was recognized for its innovative programs including a buddy system that ensures internationally trained staff integrate better into their workforce. Algonquin College was honoured for a variety of initiatives, including projects that help promote education and employment opportunities for skilled immigrants who work at the college. Algonquin College also received an Employer Excellence Award in 2008.

“The contributions of Pythian and Algonquin College are helping to put Ottawa on the map when it comes to attracting quality talent,” said Hicham Adra, ECC co-chair and President of Ardan Fitzroy Enterprises Inc. “We think today’s awards and summit will raise awareness of the importance of inclusive recruitment strategies. Such strategies make good business sense and will help businesses in this community prosper.”

The fifth annual ECC Summit, held March 6 and 7 at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa, is presented by Hire Immigrants Ottawa. The two-day conference brings together employers, senior executives from private and public sector organizations, representatives from immigrant serving organizations and other stakeholders involved in fostering solutions to the integration of skilled immigrants into the workforce.

Employers attending the summit had the opportunity to meet with a group of skilled newcomers. Human resources professionals gained and shared valuable insights and information. In order to reap the benefits of diversity, all participants were encouraged to set the tone from the top of their organizations.

“As business people and employers, we all know the difference that leading by example can make,” said Dennis Jackson, co-chair of the ECC Summit, and Vice-President of Scotiabank for Ottawa and West Quebec. “We must make sure that as employers, we make the right decisions to attract global talent,” said Jackson.

HIO’s achievements of the past five years were also recognized. For example, HIO has influenced 120 employers to make changes to their hiring policies and practices. It has also hosted coaching and networking events for 420 skilled immigrants and 300 employers. Through HIO’s outreach efforts, participating employers have hired 1,130 skilled immigrants.

“As a community, we are far better placed today to champion this issue than we were five years ago when this Council was launched,” said Jackson.

The ECC Summit acknowledged that an increasing number of Ottawa's businesses and public sector organizations now recognize the strategic importance of a workforce that reflects the diversity of the communities in which they operate. Participants were encouraged to build on that momentum.

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About the 2012 Employer Excellence Award recipients:

Medium-sized Employer, Retention Category: Pythian

Pythian, which provides remote database and consulting services, was recognized for its leadership policies, programs and staffing strategies that support the inclusion and retention of skilled immigrants into its organization. Through a collaborative, transparent hiring process, Pythian is attracting the most technically qualified candidates. In its offices in Ottawa alone, more than 30 per cent of the employees come from outside Canada. Once on the team, new employees are matched with a buddy — thereby ensuring their successful integration into the company's culture. "We recognize the differences in our employees and do not offer one-size fits all programs," says Heidi Hauver, Director, Human Resources. "Our hiring practices and policies mean that we are able to attract top global talent — and therefore achieve our targets and grow as a company." Pythian is achieving worldwide success by employing top global technical talent.

Large-Size Employer, Retention Category: Algonquin College

For the past 20 years, Algonquin College has adopted various programs to attract, retain and engage skilled immigrants. One such program, the Algonquin College Access Project, was originally designed to provide educational opportunities to employees to help them advance in their careers at Algonquin. Today, this program has evolved to become the Workforce and Personal Development stakeholder group. "The full array of Algonquin staff is committed to understanding and respecting diversity at the college," says Denyse Diakun, Director, Workforce and Personal Development. "From our Strategic Plan, to our Workforce and Personal Development group, to mandatory training and development for all managers and staff in cultural competency, the college demonstrates leadership and promotes understanding about the importance of skilled immigrants to the success and growth of the institution." Algonquin works with a number of stakeholders in the Ottawa area to develop programs and projects that will help further education and employment opportunities for skilled immigrants who work at the college.

About Hire Immigrants Ottawa

Hire Immigrants Ottawa (HIO) is a community-based initiative that brings together employers, immigrant agencies, and other stakeholders to enhance employers' ability to access the talents of skilled immigrants in the Ottawa area. The initiative was launched in 2006 in response to a growing need to identify and address barriers faced by employers in the hiring and integration of skilled immigrants into the labour force. Hire Immigrants Ottawa is funded by the Government of Ontario.

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