

## Beyond Graduation

When a trio of board directors at Salmon Arm Savings & Credit Union, BC, heard about the new national Accreditation for the Credit Union Director Achievement (*CUDA*<sup>®</sup>) Program at their board table last spring, they were immediately intrigued.

They wanted to go for the Accreditation but they didn't know if they could handle the challenge.

### Excellence in Board Governance

Today, those three directors – Laura Nyeste, June Stewart and John Schlosar – are three of the 10 directors and one CEO from across the country who accepted the challenge. They wrote the exam in November 2007 and were awarded the Accredited Canadian Credit Union Director (*ACCUD*) designation shortly thereafter.

Awarded jointly by Dalhousie University and CUSOURCE Knowledge Network, the *ACCUD* designation is granted to *CUDA* Program graduates who meet several criteria, including passing the Accreditation exam. Developed and marked by Dalhousie University, this exam is based on all three levels of the *CUDA* Program. To qualify for the Accreditation, candidates need to complete all *CUDA* Program requirements and have served on a credit union board for two years. To maintain their Accreditation, accredited directors must meet annual continuing education credits.

### Beyond Designation

This national Accreditation serves as the official proof of directors' commitment to the credit unions and communities they serve. It is also a personal validation of knowledge and skill. "The Accreditation reaffirms everything you know," Nyeste says, "and helps you connect this knowledge to your job as a director." It allows directors to grow with time and adapt to changing situations by encouraging them to continue learning.

To help prepare for the Accreditation exam, the three directors took advantage of the [elective] exam preparation courses offered by CUSOURCE Knowledge Network. They admit that the preparation for the exam could be intensive, but they all agree that it was a valuable investment. "It provides our membership with assurance that we know what we're doing," says Stewart. "It was definitely worthwhile."

For Nyeste, Stewart, and Schlosar, the Accreditation was not only a validation of knowledge but also a personal challenge – a goal that they met and of which are very proud.

"I now have a more comprehensive, more balanced view of my role and my abilities as a director," says Schlosar. "You get the totality of what you're learning. Earning the Accreditation has increased my ability and the confidence I bring to the Board table and to the membership – that you are doing your best for them."

Salmon Arm Savings & Credit Union Board has established a supportive environment and culture for directors to improve their skills and abilities. Nyeste, Stewart, and Schlosar are leading their board by example. The current board Chair, Glenn Hill, is now encouraging all Salmon Arm directors to obtain their Accreditation.

### **National Recognition of Accomplishment**

Earning the Credit Union Director Accreditation requires dedication and a desire to constantly stretch one's knowledge and skill. It allows directors to grow with time and adapt to changing situations by encouraging them to continue learning.

Congratulations to the system's 11 Accredited Canadian Credit Union Directors for the extraordinary effort and commitment to learning and bettering themselves. And best wishes to those who are pursuing the Accreditation right now.

For more information about the Accreditation, or the exam preparation courses, contact your Regional Office.