



OFFICE FOR ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

2022-2023 YEAR IN REVIEW

ABORIGINAL PEOPLES' SUPPLEMENT

New Indigenous student space at SFU Burnaby creates community

DIRECTOR, OFFICE FOR ABORIGINAL PEOPLES' MESSAGE

The Office for Aboriginal Peoples' (OAP) is delighted and honoured to share our annual newsletter with you, which provides a snap shot of some of the various Indigenous initiatives that have taken place at Simon Fraser University (SFU) over the past year.

Truth and Reconciliation focus and efforts are at the forefront and the heart of this important work and as noted in our newsletter has been embraced in many areas across the university. Among the many highlights are the advancement of safe and welcoming spaces at all three campuses for Indigenous students, the First Peoples' Gathering House project, which will be completed and opening in 2024, and the enhancement of Indigenous governance, leadership, programs and scholarship and activities.

This is a work in progress which is holistic in nature and requires a collective and shared responsibility by all across the university to advance as we all move forward on our healing journey.

In closing, I raise my hands in thanks to all students, faculty, staff, administrators and the communities we serve who have contributed to this newsletter and to SFU's Truth and Reconciliation efforts and healing journey. Although there is still much work to do, your outstanding contributions are many, keep up the good work and congratulations on a job well done!



RON JOHNSTON
Director, Office for Aboriginal Peoples



Indigenous Student Centre staff, Elders and SFU Faculty

It's not always easy to stand out at a school as big as Simon Fraser University, especially for Indigenous students who can struggle to see themselves represented in its halls.

But students say they're one step closer to feeling safe and visible on campus with the opening of the expanded Indigenous Student Centre (ISC) space in the 3000 level of the Academic Quadrangle (AQ) at Burnaby campus.

"Having this space helped me connect with other Indigenous peers and reform the connections that I felt were missing in my life here," said student Devin McCrae at the grand opening of the space Friday, Jan. 27. "I personally felt disconnected for most of my university experience here. I think it's very important for Indigenous students to be visible in the school. Now that we have this space that's not tucked away at the bottom floor of the AQ, I can see students going by to their classes and there's a lot of foot traffic. It's important to have a space just to let people know we exist on campus."

The Burnaby expansion offers new work and study spaces to support student success, including computer stations and a meeting room with web conferencing equipment.

It also features a kitchen, drumming room and opportunities for cultural connections through the ISC's programs.

Chris (Syeta'xtn) Lewis, SFU's director of Indigenous Initiatives and Reconciliation, was once a student here as well and sees the need for the new space and the community it creates.

"When I was a student, we all crammed into a small office with a few chairs and a couch in the Maggie Benston Centre. Today, Indigenous students have multiple spaces where they can go, study and be with each other and share a meal. It's about creating a community and

ensuring that Indigenous people here, at SFU, are connecting with each other so that they build a sense of belonging and thrive," Lewis said.

"We're working hard so that Indigenous students, faculty and staff that come to SFU feel safe and welcome. To accomplish this goal, it's important to see Indigenous languages on signs and walls to remind and harness that sense of belonging."

The extra space has already been a boon, according to Jessica La Rochelle, director of Indigenous Student Services.

"The students were quite vocal of having a space that is their own, that can be a place for a home away from home, and we're just very grateful that we are able to provide that."

Even before the grand opening, La Rochelle says student services set up office hours in the space to help provide services and that it has become a hub for Indigenous students to meet with faculty.

One student has even defended their thesis in the space thanks to the video conferencing available in the board room.

The drumming room has added culture and a positive atmosphere to the space.

"Having a safe space is so important for students. They don't have to explain anything, they don't have to perform, they can just be themselves," she said. "The students were quite vocal of having a space that is their own, that can be a place for a home away from home, and we're just very grateful that we are able to provide that."

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Chris (Syeta'xtn) Lewis, SFU's director of Indigenous Initiatives and Reconciliation

Chris (Syeta'xtn) Lewis joins SFU in advisory role on Indigenous Initiatives and Reconciliation



Chris (Syeta'xtn) Lewis

Over a long and meaningful connection with SFU, Chris (Syeta'xtn) Lewis has served in an ever-growing list of roles. He is an alumnus, graduating in 2005 with a BA in geography and First Nations Studies. He was a member of the Board of Governors and also served as [Board Chair](#). He was the co-chair of the Aboriginal Reconciliation Council ([SFU-ARC](#)). And in 2021 he received the [Chancellor's Distinguished Service Award](#).

“As we consider reconciliation, decolonization and Indigenous at SFU there is work to do, but I am confident that when we work together, we can achieve great things.”

Over the past year along with the former Provost, Catherine Dauvergne, Syeta'xtn is co-chair for the Indigenous Leadership Listening and Implementation Task Force (ILLIT), which is developing the senior leadership role(s) recommended in the [SFU-ARC report](#), and the subsequent [Pathways Report](#). With Dr. Dauvergne's

departure, Vice-Provost Elizabeth Elle continues this important work with Syeta'xtn. The new senior leadership role will be responsible for strategic leadership on matters related to SFU's Indigenous priorities, including in the areas of learning and teaching, research, and community engagement. In addition to establishing the new senior leadership position, Syeta'xtn will guide and support a number of other activities that help SFU move toward Truth, Reconciliation and Indigenousization.

“I am excited to continue and build on the work that has began with the *SFU Walk this Path with Us* and the *Looking Forward... Indigenous Pathways To and Through Simon Fraser University Reports*,” he says. “As we consider Truth, Reconciliation, Decolonization and Indigenousization at SFU, we have listened and heard the voices of our Indigenous communities. I am confident, with the current work and work yet to come, that when we work together we can achieve great things.”

In October 2021, Syeta'xtn completed his third consecutive four-year term as elected Councillor and Spokesperson with Squamish Nation, and continues to be an active leader in the community.

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation at SFU

In 2021, the Government of Canada moved to instate September 30, Orange Shirt Day, as a national holiday — the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. SFU commemorated Truth and Reconciliation Day across the university's three campuses in 2021 and 2022. Ceremonies featured speakers including Indigenous staff and students at SFU and Elders from local Indigenous communities. Events reflected upon the discovery of 215 unmarked graves in Kamloops in 2021 and celebrated the persistence and resilience of Indigenous peoples and their cultures. SFU continued to focus on its community partnerships, co-hosting a ceremony with the Surrey Urban Indigenous Leadership Committee and the City of Surrey, as well, private events were held for the Indigenous community at SFU, hosted by the Indigenous Student Centre.



Elder Syexwaliya (Skwxwu7mesh Uxwumixw) opens the first Truth and Reconciliation Day ceremony at SFU



SFU President Joy Johnson and Surrey campus Executive Director Steve Dooley joined a drumming procession from Surrey City Hall to Holland Park.



SFU Surrey campus staff attending the Skookum Surrey community event to mark National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.



Kali Stierle, a board member of the SFU First Nations, Métis and Inuit Students Association, speaks at the Surrey ceremony.



The community shares reflections on reconciliation and the meaning of Orange Shirt Day.



Gary George, Officer for Community Relations from the SFU Office for Aboriginal Peoples, leads Burnaby campus ceremony attendees in a drum song.



Michael Kelly Gabriel (L) and Kevin Kelly (R) of Kwantlen First Nation lead the 2022 ceremony in Surrey.

New medical school to increase access to family doctors across the Province



Start-up funding announcement for the medical school by the Provincial Government November 2022. Provincial, municipal and health leaders are joined by SFU leadership and students to mark a milestone update about the new SFU medical school.

Simon Fraser University is forging ahead with planning for the first medical school to be built in Western Canada in the last half century. The medical school aims to educate more doctors to serve underserved populations and to improve care throughout B.C.

Ten days after being sworn in as Premier of British Columbia, David Eby was at SFU's Surrey campus this past November to announce start-up funding for the medical school and to share some of the first details about [the school](#), which is aiming to accept its first students by September 2026.

"While we have made enormous progress to strengthen public health care over the last five years, we know that many British Columbians are struggling to find a family doctor and waiting too long for care on a waiting list or in an emergency room," said Premier David Eby. "That's why we are taking action to train, recruit and retain family doctors now — and taking these steps with Simon Fraser University to train the health workforce we'll need in the future. This investment in the first entirely new medical school in Western Canada in 55 years will mean more family doctors graduating each year to provide care for people."

The new program will be based in Surrey, with place-based learning opportunities across the province. First Nations, Inuit and Métis knowledge systems and perspectives will be embedded throughout the school, with strong connections to remote, rural, and Indigenous communities.

"The new medical school will serve everyone in B.C. — particularly underserved populations — training the next generation of doctors in communities throughout the province."

"SFU is excited about the progress we're making with the Province, health authorities, and Indigenous partners towards a new medical school," says SFU President Joy Johnson. "With this announcement, we've hit another important milestone on that journey. The new medical school will serve everyone in B.C. — particularly underserved populations — training the next generation of doctors in communities throughout the province."

The provincial government announced in 2020 that it would create B.C.'s second medical school at SFU's Surrey campus.

In the fall of 2021, the Office of the Provost and Vice-President Academic hosted an information session and discussion for interested students, faculty, and staff, beginning the internal community engagement process for the proposed school.

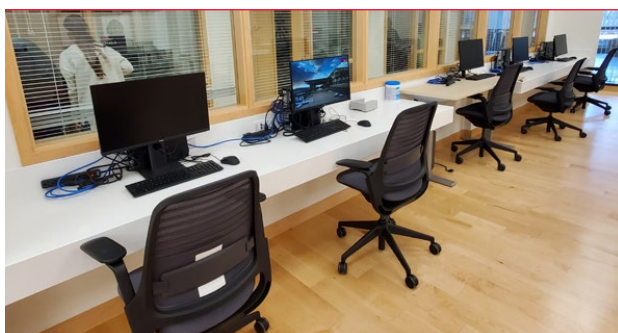
Participants suggested values and principles to guide the early planning of the school, including collaboration and teamwork, transparency, holistic approaches, partnerships, equity, diversity and inclusion, environmental sustainability and longevity, and bold actions.

In early 2022 a similar engagement session was held for Indigenous SFU students, faculty and staff who were prompted with three questions:

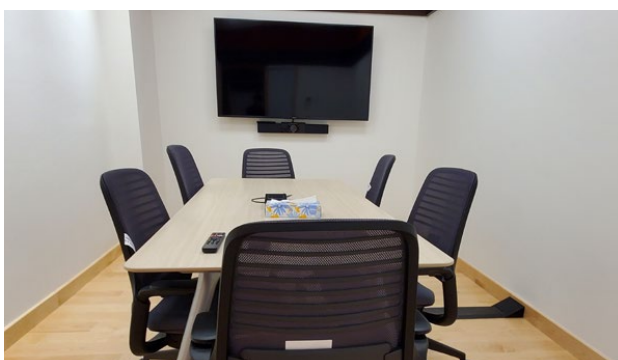
1. What opportunities exist for the SFU medical program to do things differently, in ways that will meet the health care needs of Indigenous peoples across the province?
2. From your perspective, what opportunities do you see for SFU to educate a new generation of doctors?
3. What concerns do you have or challenges do you see for the SFU medical school? What is your best advice moving forward to address these concerns/challenges?

Each question resulted in valuable feedback, detailed in the [What We Heard report](#), which will inform planning and guide next steps.

Since then, the university has been hard at work laying the foundations for the program. Planning work is well underway for accreditation, curriculum planning, and space planning. A project board has been established to oversee the planning work for a final business case. Membership for the project board includes members from the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills and the Ministry of Health with SFU. Indigenous health leaders and the First Nations Health Authority continue to guide SFU on First Nations, Inuit and Métis knowledge systems and perspectives.



Expanded work and study space, including computer stations.



Meeting room with web conferencing equipment

Cover story continued...

ISC's expanded presence isn't restricted to Burnaby campus.

There's also a new location at the Surrey campus and additional space has been allocated at the Vancouver campus for future expansion.

The construction of these new spaces was made possible through the partnership between the ISC, Student Services and Facilities.

The project addresses calls to actions 8 and 11 of the [Walk this Path with Us Report](#): to expand the Indigenous Student Centre on Burnaby Campus, and to use Aboriginal Strategic Initiative

(ASI) funds to pilot the development and installation of safe spaces at Burnaby, and employ other funding opportunities in subsequent years to create dedicated spaces at the other campuses.

"We recognize that it is not just for Indigenous students, faculty and staff to do the work of Reconciliation," says SFU president Joy Johnson. "It is for all of us to walk this path and move forward together. I'm excited to open this new space and celebrate a milestone on our journey, and as we continue to make progress, I look forward to the celebrations ahead."

Visit the [ICS website](#) for more information on its study spaces and services.

National Indigenous Peoples Month

For generations, many Indigenous peoples and communities have celebrated their culture and heritage on or near June 21 due to the significance of the summer solstice as the longest day of the year.

The Indigenous community at SFU has also begun to recognize “National Indigenous Peoples Month” rather than “National Indigenous History Month” as typically observed in June, for a more meaningful representation of what is celebrated. “The word ‘history’ can perpetuate the common misconception that Indigenous peoples are only in the past, however, this is not the case as we are still around today,” shares the Indigenous Student Centre. “The use of National Indigenous Peoples Month is intended to better encapsulate not only our history, but present-day culture and knowledges.”

This past June, SFU joined communities across Canada to honour the history, culture, resilience and contributions of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples, and all that they bring to SFU and the world.



SFU Woodward's Cultural Programs and Full Circle First Nations Performance co-presented the Talking Stick Festival, a showcase and celebration of Indigenous art and performance.



The Talking Stick Festival included events such as *sacred skin*, a tattoo art exhibition, a film screening of *Stories that Transform Us*, and an Indigenous Music Circle workshop (pictured).





SFU also showcased Indigenous artists through a special series of ArtsLive performances. Pictured here, Wild Moccasin Dancers Shyama-Priya, Cree and David Whitebean, Mohawk.



National Indigenous People's Day, June 21, in collaboration with host nations Semiahmoo First Nation, Kwantlen First Nation and Katzie First Nation, and the City of Surrey.



To close the month, the Indigenous Student Centre and First Nations, Métis and Inuit Students Association organized SFU's first Indigenous Market. This popular event brought local Indigenous artists and makers to Burnaby campus to showcase and sell their goods. Pictured here is jewellery maker Jocelyn Kuhn (Opal Soul Designs) and paintings by Courtney Dick.

RESEARCH

Indigenous-led study to improve child health and wellness



Working with the Nuu-Chah-Nulth Tribal Council and the First Nations Health Authority, SFU researchers are working to optimize health and wellness for Indigenous children from the moment they are conceived. Photo credit: Kandyce Joeline of Songbird and Oak Photography.

Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council (NTC) in Port Alberni is leading a long-term study to improve health and wellness for Indigenous children, with collaboration from Indigenous leaders and communities, First Nations Health Authority, and researchers from Simon Fraser University and the University of Alberta. This work is being funded by a \$16 million grant from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research.

“This historic opportunity represents one of the first times that the Institute has recognized Indigenous community leadership in a large research award...”

The project, called *Hishuk-ish tsawalk* (*everything is one, everything is connected*): *Restoring healthy family systems in Indigenous communities*, is being led by Lynette Lucas, NTC director of health and an adjunct professor in SFU’s Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS). Lea Bill, executive director of the Alberta First Nations Information Governance Centre (AFNIGC), is the project’s co-principal investigator.

The collaborators’ top priorities will be to examine the leading causes of cardiovascular and mental health problems, in Indigenous contexts, and examine the efficacy of existing programs in reducing risk as well as determining the impact of biological and social mechanisms, as they affect children and their families.

“This historic opportunity represents one of the first times that the Institute has recognized Indigenous community leadership in a large research award,” says NTC President Judith Sayers, “and we welcome this announcement as a big step forward in health for our children.”

Community members from 23 First Nations—including the 14 Nuu-chah-nulth Nations as well as the Cree Nations of Maskwacis, Alberta, and the Cree and Dene Nations of the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, Alberta—will contribute their leadership, skills and support for this community-led study.

“Elders and other knowledge holders are guiding every step,” says Lucas. “Most stories about Indigenous people tend to focus on stereotypes and deficits. Our intent is to explore the root causes of health disparities giving emphasis to Indigenous ways of knowing.”

Researchers will carry out a cross-sectional study of families and a long-term study of child development.

One objective will be to generate new approaches aimed at restoring traditional family systems by creating supportive environments and reducing negative exposures during early development, starting before conception.

SFU’s research team includes FHS professors Pablo Nepomnaschy, Jeff Reading, and Charlotte Waddell, associate professor Scott Venners and research associate Katrina Salvante. The team will advise on data governance and support the supervision of graduate students’ research activities.

SFU’s vice-president, research and international (VPRI) portfolio will also contribute logistical resources from its institutional strategic awards team to assist with project management as well as staffing and student funding supports.

SFU VP Research and International Dugan O’Neil says: “This is a very exciting study. We are honoured to partner with the NTC as they carry out such important work in their communities. This partnership embodies our commitment to reconciliation and facilitating successful Indigenous-led scholarship.”

Research aims to address early challenges

Nepomnaschy says the project’s main goal will be to identify factors that provide resilience to children to face life challenges, so that they can develop strength and be ready for all the challenges in life.

“SFU is excited to see NTC leading the expansion of this important work,” he says. “We’re pleased to [continue](#)



our partnership with NTC and look forward to sharing knowledge and expertise and supporting all of the community-based Indigenous research partners across B.C. and Alberta.”

Waddell, who also directs the Children’s Health Policy Centre (CHPC) observes: “NTC’s relationship-based and community-embedded approach to this work will be critical not only to better understand what actions can be taken to improve health outcomes for Indigenous children, but also to provide an Indigenous cultural framework for policy recommendations and guidelines.

“These will enable non-Indigenous stakeholders to engage in appropriate and meaningful ways with Indigenous children and their families.”

Embedding an Indigenous lens

One of the most critical parts of this new phase of *Hishuk-ish tsawalk* (*everything is one, everything is connected*) will involve Reading working with both NTC and AFNIGC to embed an Indigenous lens to the ethics structures for the upcoming project.

“It’s essential that the work being undertaken is respectful, culturally safe, and carried out with the

informed consent of Indigenous community members,” says Reading. “We will also work with the NTC and AFNIGC to develop Indigenous-led data governance and data sovereignty, so that the Nations partnering with us in these investigations will have ownership of, control of, and access to their collected health information.”

“It’s essential that the work being undertaken is respectful, culturally safe, and carried out with the informed consent of Indigenous community members...”

Dr. Earl Nowgesic, associate scientific director of the CIHR Institute of Indigenous Peoples’ Health commends the NTC and their collaborators for adding to the growing body of Indigenous-led health research.

“They are leaders in the area of developmental origins of health and disease (DOHaD) and Indigenous populations. *Hishuk-ish tsawalk* is exemplary, and has great potential to contribute to the wellness of Indigenous Nations now and for generations to come. Miigwetch.”

[Read the official NTC press release.](#)

Residential School research project reunites children with their communities

This content may be distressing or triggering of traumatic experiences. Please reach out if you need support, available 24/7 at: The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Residential School Crisis Line: 1-866-925-4419 and the Indian Residential School Survivors Society Emergency Crisis Line: 1-800-721-0066.

Over a decade ago, Simon Fraser University (SFU) researchers began work on the [Brandon Indian Residential School](#) (IRS) Cemeteries Project, an important collaboration with the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation (SVDN) of southwestern Manitoba.

The project seeks to reclaim the identities of children who died at the school while it was in operation between 1895 and 1972. Investigations into the cemeteries and unmarked graves began in 2012 when the SVDN—which owns a portion of the school property—collaborated with Katherine Nichols, who was then a University of Manitoba master’s student. As a PhD candidate at SFU, Nichols continues her research at the Brandon Indian Residential School.

Faculty at Brandon University and the University of Windsor are also partners in this research, which received Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council funding support in 2019.

SFU Indigenous Studies Professor and archaeologist Eldon Yellowhorn is the principal investigator for the project. Yellowhorn supervised Nichols, and works with SFU researchers Deanna Reder, Hugo Cardoso and Dongya Yang and with students and research assistants from SFU. Faculty from the partner universities include Emily Holland (Brandon) and John Albanese (Windsor). They are using a variety of methods including archival research, oral history interviews with community members and Elders, and non-invasive archaeological and forensic search techniques.

Identifying and acknowledging the children at the Brandon IRS site—and all former Canadian residential school sites—is a human rights issue and a vital step towards finding answers for communities and for moving forward. Despite the challenges, Yellowhorn and the team are committed to ensuring their research is community-led, grounded in culture, follows the guidance of Elders and follows protocols for ethical research.

As one of Canada’s first collaborative, in-depth research investigations into unmarked graves associated with a residential school, Yellowhorn hopes that their efforts will provide a framework that can be adopted and applied by other Indigenous communities, as a guide to initiate and proceed in their own process. “It is very important for our communities to have control over our lives and histories,” he says. “We hope this project shows that we are capable of doing this work within the community and we do not have to wait for outside experts—we can be the experts.”

“...the nature of this research can be emotionally taxing. Although we can rely on our scientific objectivity to partially shield us, we cannot unplug our humanity.”

We spoke with Professor Yellowhorn about his research.

Can you tell us about some of the challenges associated with taking on a project of this nature? How have the researchers overcome these challenges?

I can only speak for myself when I say the nature of this research can be emotionally taxing. Although we can rely on our scientific objectivity to partially shield us, we cannot unplug our humanity. We are people with our own family connections. When I first started looking for abandoned cemeteries, I gained a greater

appreciation of my relatives and friends. I can make a general observation that our team finds solace in knowing our research will give answers to people who have been waiting a long time to find out why children died at this school.

Have you been able to identify many of the children and their associated communities?

Based on the initial surveys that Nichols conducted using various geophysical methods, we were confident that 104 was an accurate count of burials in this cemetery. Despite the great strain the COVID-19 pandemic put on our project objectives, we are positive that we have reclaimed the identities of 99 of the children buried there. We are now able to reach out to the communities where children have family ties. Moreover, the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation has hosted several delegations from northern Manitoba to discuss next steps for their relatives buried here.

Has the community decided on any plans for the future of the site?

There are several options ranging from commemoration of the place to repatriation. Families affected by this research and representatives from the home communities of these children will contribute to determining the next steps. In the meantime, we will continue to scour archival records and conduct oral history interviews until we have reclaimed the identities of the last group of unknown children.



Professor
Eldon Yellowhorn

Ancient Forest Gardens in Nuchatlaht ḥaḥuuti?ak?i (territory) illuminate hishuk’ush tsawalk (everything is one) nisma (land) and caa?ak (water) stewardship

“This work builds on previous research showing that contemporary plant communities that appear ‘wild’ may in fact reflect legacies of historical and ancient plant stewardship.”



Aerial shot. Credit: Troy Moth

Research combining archaeological, ecological data and traditional ecological knowledge has identified ancient orchards and forest gardens on Nootka Island, located off the west coast of Vancouver Island, demonstrating active Indigenous cultivation on the land.

“These orchards and forest gardens are unlike anything growing in ‘natural’ ecological distributions of plant species.”

Published in May 2022 in the [Journal of Archaeological Science](#), the latest research shines a light on how Nuchatlaht (Nuu-chah-nulth) people have cultivated plant foods in their ḥaḥuuti?ak?i (“Ha-houl-thee,” territory) since time immemorial. Forest gardens—ecosystems stewarded for their fruit, berry, and root plants—were recently identified on Nootka Island by Nuchatlaht knowledge holders, archaeologists and botanists at Simon Fraser University and the New York Botanical Garden.

“These orchards and forest gardens are unlike anything growing in ‘natural’ ecological distributions of plant species, demonstrating active Indigenous cultivation on the land and concerted efforts to manage forests in ways recognizable to western European food cultivation worldviews,” says Chelsey Geralda Armstrong, an assistant professor of Indigenous Studies at Simon Fraser University who has been working with Nuchatlaht Nation for over a year.

This is the first academic research project to document the material evidence of cultivation and land stewardship in Nuchatlaht territory, including practices like *cicih?aqʷmapt* (crabapple) orcharding, *quuxʷapah* (wild rice root) gardening, *qawii* (berry) patch stewarding, and controlled burning.

The research also shows how these ancient food-forests, some with trees hundreds of years old, continue to grow adjacent to large archaeological village sites on Nootka Island despite government displacement and harmful logging practices. The research was solicited by Nuchatlaht Nation, who are pursuing a claim of Aboriginal Title to roughly 200 square kilometres of Northern Nootka Island. Their case is currently being heard in the B.C. Supreme Court.

“Indigenous peoples’ legacies of plant cultivation and management can have profound effects on contemporary forest structure and species composition long after traditional cultivation was oppressed by colonial governments,” says Armstrong. “This work builds on previous research showing that contemporary plant communities that appear ‘wild’ may in fact reflect legacies of historical and ancient plant stewardship.”

The research further demonstrates Nuchatlaht stewardship by documenting over 8,000 culturally-modified trees located deep within Nootka Island’s forests. The dense concentration of archaeological sites and modified ecosystems indicates Nuchatlaht people actively occupied, managed, and utilized their territory. They did this from the worldview *hishuk’ish tsawalk* (everything is one).

New Indigenous-led economic reconciliation framework to guide the way forward

A path to economic reconciliation is [outlined in a 2022 report](#) by Sxwpilemaát Siyám, Hereditary Chief Leanne Joe, of the Squamish Nation, in partnership with SFU's Community Economic Development (CED) program. Sxwpilemaát Siyám, an alumnus of the program and CED transformative storyteller and instructor, says [Step Into the River: The Economic Reconciliation Framework](#), tells a story of hope for the future and invites people to “step into the river and be agents of change.”

“Broadly speaking for Indigenous Peoples, storytelling is the foundation of articulating lived values that form the basis for Indigenous governance and regeneration,” says Sxwpilemaát Siyám.

Economic reconciliation builds on and addresses the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Call to Action #92 that focuses on Business and Reconciliation.

“Community economic developers have been longing for a framework, like this, that can help us to truly incorporate Indigenous Peoples, communities and nations into these processes to support engaged, meaningful and transformative economic reconciliation.”

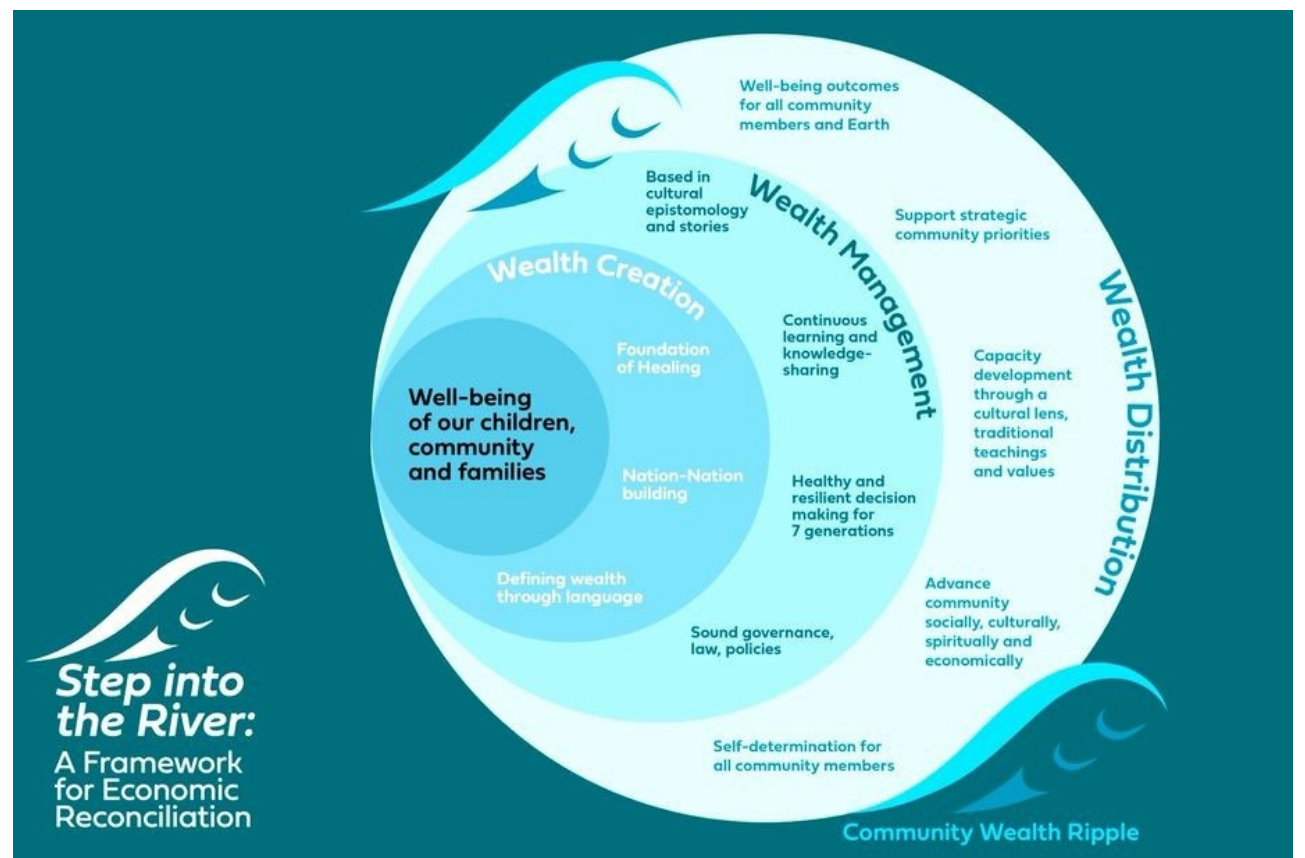
“Economic reconciliation is not just about our ‘own source revenue’, it is so much more than that. The foundation of well-being is a child/family centred approach to wellness,” she says. “It means bringing balance back into our lives, spiritually, mentally, physically, emotionally through healing and forgiveness, acceptance, and grounded in our cultural values.”

Intended to inform municipalities, institutions and industry partners, the Framework describes the current state of economic reconciliation and how we might envision a future economy centered on well-being and rooted in Indigenous values and knowledge. It offers a set of values, mind shifts and practices to support how practitioners, local governments, organizations, institutions and industry partners can engage in reconciliation to meet that desired outcome.

The document invites readers to open their hearts and minds to an Indigenous worldview and provides stepping stones through the journey of economic transformation. “From building meaningful relationships, to building capacity and skills and supporting Indigenous self-determination, there is no one size fits all approach,” says Sxwpilemaát Siyám.

“The extent to which economic reconciliation can be transformative in nature depends on whether we are willing to transform.”

Committed to confronting colonial history and affecting transformative change, SFU's CED program partnered with Sxwpilemaát Siyám in 2019 to host a series of dialogues with Indigenous thought leaders and



representatives of Indigenous-led organizations across B.C. to explore economic reconciliation, and how it might transform the current economy to a sustainable one for “our collective well-being.”

“Community economic development (CED) is an inclusive and participatory process by which communities initiate and generate their own multiple bottom-line solutions to economic challenges — with a focus on collective well-being, resilience and sustainability,” says CED program director Ryan Watmough.

“Community economic developers have been longing for a framework, like this, that can help us to truly incorporate Indigenous Peoples, communities and nations into these processes to support engaged, meaningful and transformative economic reconciliation.”

Watmough says Sxwpilemaát Siyám's river analogy confronts traditional economic development thinking of bridge building, separation, and implementing solutions above or around the challenges faced by communities. “We need to build better, more immersive, just and resilient, reciprocal connections with the world, our organizations and each other, to truly create sustainable prosperity,” he says.

The Framework explores ways in which our relationship to wealth needs changing, the authors note. “The current colonial economic model is built on the myth of perpetual material growth which creates waste, degrades nature, disregards justice and fails to ensure equity. It is structured around dependency rather than well-being and the impacts are plainly visible and felt across different scales. For our economy to shift, we need to rethink what we value, how we relate to one another and how we make decisions.”

The Framework shares Indigenous worldviews about wealth and sustainability that are a source of wisdom for economic transformation. A key component of this wisdom is the Community Wealth Ripple, a model envisioned by Sxwpilemaát Siyám, that intentionally centers children and families when creating, managing and distributing wealth.

“When this happens, wealth moves through communities supporting strategic priorities, building capacity and self-determination and benefitting individuals, Mother Earth, all living creatures and so much more,” she says.

Watmough suggests that as the implications of this economic reconciliation framework are understood more broadly, “they will provoke curiosity and re-form the foundation of our CED thinking, our knowing, our practices and our program, guiding us on an enlightening journey.”



Sxwpilemaát Siyám, Hereditary Chief Leanne Joe, of the Squamish Nation.

INDIGENOUS GRADUATE ENTRANCE

Scholarship Recipients

Celebrating Indigenous graduate scholarship winners

In 2022, SFU selected two Indigenous graduate students to receive the Indigenous Graduate Entrance Scholarship. The Office of the Vice-President, Academic established the scholarship in 2013 to encourage Indigenous students to consider graduate studies and, ultimately, a career in post-secondary education.



Andrew Caldwell

PhD student fuses Indigenous queer studies and criminology

SFU PhD student Andrew Caldwell is a recipient of the 2022 Indigenous Graduate Entrance Scholarship to support his research, which incorporates Indigenous queer studies and criminology. Caldwell is a registered band member of the Algonquin (Anishinaabe) First Nations from the Kitigan Zibi (“River Desert”) Anishinabeg (Peoples) community located on the shores of the Gatineau River near Maniwaki, Quebec and of European-settler descent.

Caldwell’s research focuses on how the Canadian criminal justice system policies and programs address the needs of Indigenous federally incarcerated Two-Spirit peoples. “The Two-Spirit identity is not a predominant demographic within the criminal justice system,” says Caldwell. “Those confined become lost due to the Eurocentric nature of the system.”

Caldwell is an Indigenous policy analyst with the Employment and Social Development Canada at the Office of Indigenous Initiatives, Innovation Information and Technology Branch, and an associate faculty member with the Canada School of Public Service. He was also employed with the Correctional Services of Canada as an Indigenous correctional program officer for 10 years and worked at all security levels and community corrections.

“I am grateful for the scholarship and the opportunity to be back at SFU.”

In 2006, Caldwell received his Bachelor of General Studies Arts degree with a minor in Sociology from SFU. He embedded himself within SFU’s vibrant and diverse community by teaching dance lessons through SFU Recreation and being a volunteer actor in a student film. Caldwell also earned a Master of Arts degree in Criminal Justice from the University of the Fraser Valley where he graduated with distinction.

“I am grateful for the scholarship and the opportunity to be back at SFU,” says Caldwell, who plans to present his research nationally and internationally and continue building relationships with Two-Spirit and Indigenous LGBTQ+ communities as a means of cultural reclamation and reconciliation. Caldwell is thankful for his ancestors guiding him in a good way and the opportunity of being on this journey to assist with change and healing.



Lauren Crazybull

Niitsítapi, Dené artist challenges colonial representations through powerful portraiture

Niitsítapi and Dené artist Lauren Crazybull, a Master of Fine Arts student at SFU’s School of Contemporary Arts, is a 2022 recipient of the Indigenous Graduate Entrance Scholarship. Supervised by Judy Radul, Crazybull’s powerful oil paintings challenge colonial representations and focus on Indigenous presence in visual culture.

In her work, Crazybull interrogates how Indigenous identities have been historically represented and understood through visual culture. Working primarily in portraiture, a long-standing genre that is often embedded with an imbalance of power between the artist/viewer and sitter, Crazybull seeks to examine the relationship between herself as an artist and the individuals she paints.

“Being able to focus on coursework and art production is invaluable”

Through this ongoing work, Lauren uses her portraits to assert her own humanity, and advocate, in diverse and subtle ways, for the innate intellectual, spiritual, creative, and political fortitude of Indigenous peoples.

After the Master of Fine Arts program, Crazybull will continue her studio practice and hopes to have a greater conceptual framework around her ideas. Crazybull expresses the impact the program has had on her practice. “Feedback from my peers and faculty has been a central part of growth as an artist and the coursework helped me gain a better understanding of art in many disciplines,” explains Crazybull.

“I am so grateful for the scholarship,” says Crazybull, “It is helping me focus on my studies and it allows me to spend more time in the studio creating work. Being able to focus on coursework and art production is invaluable.”

Graduate students named Vanier Scholars

This past November two Indigenous SFU graduate students were named as Vanier Scholars for the 2022 competition year.

The Government of Canada launched the Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarships (Vanier CGS) program in 2008 to strengthen Canada's ability to attract and retain world-class doctoral students and establish Canada as a global centre of excellence in research and higher learning. Vanier Scholars demonstrate leadership skills and a high standard of scholarly achievement in graduate studies in the social sciences and humanities, natural sciences and/or engineering and health. Recipients receive a \$50,000 scholarship per year over the course of three years from the following federal agencies: [Canadian Institutes of Health Research \(CIHR\)](#), [Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council \(NSERC\)](#) and [Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council \(SSHRC\)](#)

Congratulations to the recipients!



MICHAELA M. MCGUIRE/JAAD GUDGHLJIWAH

Gaag'yals KiiGawaay and a citizen of the Haida Nation

Michaela is a School of Criminology PhD student examining the importance of belonging, justice, and injustice by analyzing decolonization, belonging, resurgence and self-governance.



TIARA CASH

Black American and Unenrolled Chahta of Tsalagi descent

Tiara is a graduate student in social psychology who is focusing on the intersections of life transitions and pro-social behaviors on well-being outcomes.



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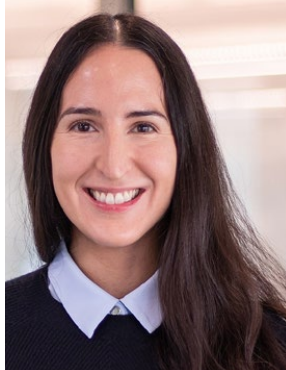
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SFU WELCOMES INDIGENOUS FACULTY & STAFF

SFU FACULTY



Dr. Krista Stelkia

Krista Stelkia joined the Faculty of Health Sciences in 2022 as an assistant professor and interim co-director for the Centre for Collaborative Action on Indigenous Health Governance, a partnership between SFU FHS and First Nations Health Authority. She is Syilx/Tlingit from the Osoyoos Indian Band in B.C.'s interior. Stelkia is an interdisciplinary Indigenous health researcher whose research primarily investigates the structural determinants of Indigenous peoples' health and wellbeing.



Dr. Dustin King

Biochemist Dustin King is weaving an Indigenous worldview into western science through his role in leading a new laboratory at SFU. King, who is half Ojibwe from the Thessalon First Nation, joined the Faculty of Science in 2022 as an assistant professor of molecular biology and biochemistry. Research conducted by the [King Laboratory](#) will focus on how organisms sense and respond to carbon dioxide (CO₂), work that can have a critical impact in this era of climate change.



Dr. Wenona Hall

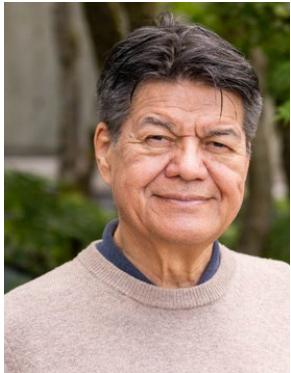
Wenona Hall is Stó:lō from Sq'ewqeyl First Nation and the Ts'elxwéyeqw Tribe located in Chilliwack B.C. Hall joined SFU's Indigenous Studies Department in November 2022 as an associate professor and in September 2023 will assume the position of Chair of the Indigenous Studies Program. Her research interests are in Indigenous Governance, Indigenous Justice, Processes of Decolonization and Indigenous Resurgence. She is also a mother of three beautiful children: Jade (23), Justice (20) and Alexis Lyle Victor (18).



Dr. Zoe Todd

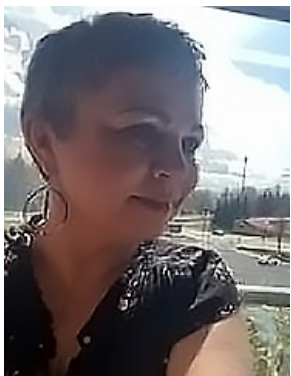
Zoe Todd (she/they) who joined the Indigenous Studies Department in November 2022 as an associate professor is a Red River Métis scholar from Edmonton, Alberta. She studies the relationships between freshwater fish futures and Indigenous sovereignty in Canada, with a particular focus on freshwater fish relationships in her home province of Alberta. As an artist-researcher, Todd employs diverse methods including artistic research-creation, immersive social science approaches, and 'critical Indigenous fish philosophy' to help dynamic collectives assert the well-being of fish in the face of complex challenges.

SFU STAFF



Tim Michel

Tim Michel, who is Secwepemc from Csteln (Adams Lake), joined SFU in 2022 as director of Indigenous Relations for the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. He has worked in Indigenous student services and Indigenous communities and organizations. At SFU, Michel has also worked as a lecturer in the Faculty of Education, a community research coordinator in Health Sciences, and as the Indigenous Coordinator in Work Integrated Learning. In his new role, Michel will help the faculty engage with Indigenous faculty, staff, students, and communities to support, recruit and grow Indigenous faculty and support Indigenous alums and existing and future students.



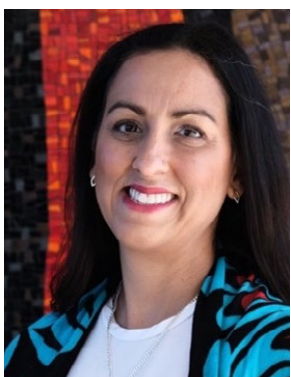
Angela Wolfe

Angela Wolfe, a nehiyaw iskwew (Cree woman) from Ermineskin Cree First Nation has dedicated her academic career to creating pathways for Indigenous students to reach their goals in post-secondary education. Wolfe joined SFU in 2022 as the Director of Indigenous Recruitment and Admissions where she supports initiatives that invite Indigenous students to the university and supports those who already call SFU their educational home. Wolfe's professional philosophy is rooted in practicing Wahkohtowin (relational interconnectedness) by sharing Indigenous knowledge and ways of being to enrich the learning journeys of students.



Madison Chad

Madison Chad, of Métis background, joined Indigenous Student Recruitment in Student Services in 2022 as a liaison coordinator. She is also a proud SFU alumnus of History and Indigenous Studies. Chad says getting students excited about their unlimited potential and all that SFU has to offer is one of the many joys of the job.



Jennifer Reandy

Jennifer Reandy, a Cree from Northern Alberta and Settler ancestry (India, Wales), is a registered clinical counsellor with the Indigenous Student Centre. Joining SFU in 2021, Reandy's work is grounded in Indigenous ways of knowing that stress the importance for reciprocity, relevance, responsibility and relationships.



Audrey Heath

Audrey Heath, of Gitxsan and mixed European ancestry is SFU's Indigenous Student Life Coordinator at the Indigenous Student Centre (ISC). Before beginning her full-time position, Heath joined the ISC in April 2021 as a co-op student. While working at the ISC, Heath is also completing a Bachelor of Arts with a double major in Communication and Indigenous Studies.



Jasmin Glaw

Jasmin Glaw is an Anishinaabekwe of the Algonquins of Pikwàkanagàn First Nation and of German heritage. She joined the Indigenous Student Centre (ISC) as the departmental assistant in May 2021 and quickly integrated herself into the ISC community transitioning into her new role as Indigenous Student Life Coordinator.



Elizabeth Adams

Elizabeth Adams, from Nisga'a and mixed European ancestry, joined SFU in August 2022 as one of the Indigenous Student Life coordinators at the Indigenous Student Centre. Adams looks forward to meeting students and learning about how she can support them on their educational journeys.

From player to Coach: Sharing the love for sport

“As I learnt more about my culture and our history, I have become prouder of my heritage, and I strive to be the best person I can be to leave a positive effect on my community and people...”



Left to Right Owen McBride. Photos credit: SFU Athletics

For many youth athletes, the love for sport has been overshadowed by the extreme pressure to win. Owen McBride, an Indigenous student athlete on SFU’s men’s soccer team identified this issue with youth sports and launched Private Coaching Co., a program dedicated to helping young athletes fall in love with sport.

Born and raised in North Vancouver, McBride is a member of the Lax Kw’alaams Band, located near Prince Rupert. “As I learnt more about my culture and our history, I have become prouder of my heritage, and I strive to be the best person I can be to leave a positive effect on my community and people,” says McBride.

Succeeding through many soccer clubs, including the Vancouver Whitecaps Residency program and Mountain United, where McBride captained for several years, his 17-year soccer journey ultimately led him to SFU, where he has played for the past four years.

At 19 years old, McBride began his entrepreneurial journey with Private Coaching Co. with the mission of helping one million kids love their sport while staying active and healthy. “The love of coaching has always

stuck with me,” says the fourth-year Health Sciences major. “Nothing makes me happier than helping young athletes achieve their goals while becoming amazing people in the process.”

Having been in coaching roles since the age of 12, McBride is a natural leader. He credits the team environment he grew up in as the foundation for his leadership and entrepreneurial spirit. “Being part of a team my whole life has taught me the importance of communication, empathy, and the drive to success,” says McBride who is also pursuing a Business minor.

McBride says a team of great mentors including his family and friends, and the SFU staff have been a fantastic support system as he navigates being a student athlete and business owner. “As any athlete in a university environment knows, a season can be very demanding on the body and brain, so it is a battle to take care of yourself as the semester progresses,” says McBride, who hopes to continue being a mentor for young athletes as they fall in love with sport.

New master's degree program established to support language revitalization

In response to the urgent need expressed by Indigenous communities in British Columbia and the Yukon to produce advanced speakers and documentarians of their languages, SFU's Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) has established the Master of Arts in [Indigenous Languages and Linguistics](#) (INLL).

Approved in March 2022 by the Ministry of Advanced Education, the new master's program is offered through the Department of [Linguistics](#) and the [Indigenous Languages Program](#) (INLP).

In partnership with Indigenous communities and organizations, INLL focuses entirely on training individuals who will go on to support the reclamation, revitalization, and strengthening of their Indigenous languages. This is part of the long-term goal to significantly restore Indigenous language loss resulting from the devastating history of dispossession, discrimination, (cultural) genocide and linguicide that generations of Indigenous peoples experienced and continue to experience.

In this two-year program, cohorts will be formed either focused on a specific language, or as mixed cohorts involving two or more languages. The language(s) will be chosen based on student demand and language proficiency of the incoming cohort. An instructional and student supervision team will be established for each cohort and consist of faculty members in the Department of Linguistics and INLP, with the support of Elders and advanced fluent speakers in Indigenous communities as needed.

INLL is a unique graduate level program of study, in which it prioritizes Indigenous ways of inquiry and knowledge production while situating students within a dialogue of linguistic analysis and documentation. The learning model also features Indigenous community participation in projects and provides students with mentorship by Indigenous Elders and knowledge keepers. Recognizing the need to provide flexibility to students, especially those situated in remote communities, the program delivery will

comprise a combination of remote instruction in addition to face-to-face seminars at SFU's campuses and within Indigenous communities.

Since 1993, the INLP has partnered with communities to offer courses in 18 Indigenous languages from across British Columbia and Yukon. The program first started with its certificate and diploma offerings but has since expanded to create a pathway for students to receive their post-secondary degree.

As FASS celebrates the creation of this new graduate program, the faculty acknowledges its dedicated faculty members and Indigenous community partners who have worked tirelessly to bring this idea into reality. FASS is committed to continue advancing reconciliation through improving the success rates of Indigenous students, increasing research opportunities for Indigenous scholars, and mobilizing Indigenous ways of knowing.

Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue appoints three new Dialogue Fellows working towards decolonization, reconciliation and Indigenous ways of knowing

In early 2022, the SFU Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue appointed three new Dialogue Fellows to lead initiatives that focus on reconciliation and decolonization: Kris Archie, Dr. Karine Duhamel and Lindsay Heller. The appointments reflect the Fellows' distinguished professional achievements and their work will help shape two new themes in the Centre's programming: Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Redefining Philanthropy.

Archie, Duhamel and Heller join Ginger Gosnell-Myers, the Centre's first Indigenous Dialogue Fellow working on urban Indigenous planning, as well as numerous other Dialogue Fellows who are partnering with the Centre to address various issues of fundamental significance to our communities.



Kris Archie, a Secwepemc and Seme7 woman from the Ts'qescen First Nation, is the Chief Executive Officer of The Circle on Philanthropy and Aboriginal Peoples in Canada where she has built a national member-based organization that is focusing on moving money from settler philanthropy to Indigenous communities, nations, movements and projects. Archie is also an experienced facilitator and teacher, serving as an instructor in SFU's Continuing Studies and recently, as a co-instructor for the Centre's Semester in Dialogue program on philanthropy. Archie's fellowship at the Centre will serve as a foundational framework for understanding Indigenous teachings — her work aims to explore Indigenous world-views and to bring Indigenous scholarship in a time and place where the settler-philanthropic sector is trying to make sense of how it remains relevant in the world.



Dr. Karine Duhamel is Anishinaabe-Métis and was the Director of Research for the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG), where she drafted the Final Report and managed the Forensic Document Review Project and the Legacy Archive. Since then, she has focused on this issue in other ways, including as curator at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, independent consultant for Indigenous women's organizations and most recently, through an appointment within the MMIWG Secretariat with Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC). During her fellowship, Duhamel will lead and support Indigenous programming and education and consult on relevant Centre projects. Her focus at the Centre will be to work with Indigenous communities and groups to articulate and communicate the importance of different issues including trauma and healing, cultural and personal safety and what it means in diversity-led practice to seek reconciliation.



Lindsay Heller is a Nehiyaw scholar, skilled facilitator and member of the Michel First Nation, who makes her home on unceded Musqueam territory. Heller has supported several post-secondary and government clients engaging in decolonization through a wide variety of dialogues, including her work with the Centre's Community Responses to Racism, the National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and consultations for the Province of British Columbia on emergency public health measures. At the Centre, Heller will create and deliver workshops, professional development opportunities and dialogue circles that weave together Indigenous knowledge and western science. Drawing on her experiences in co-creating and co-teaching several land-based courses for the University of Saskatchewan, as well as her role in developing Indigenous science curriculum in SFU's Health Sciences Department, these learning opportunities will provide a chance for SFU faculty, professionals and educators of all levels to begin their personal and institutional transformation in reconciliation and decolonization.

Building foundations for transformation

Len Pierre, member of Katzie First Nation and founder of his own Indigenous consulting firm, [Len Pierre Consulting](#), says completing his Master of Education degree at SFU helped lay the foundation for the principles and practices he brings to his work facilitating Indigenous cultural safety training, reconciliation, decolonization and anti-racism in large organizations.

Raised with deep ties to his Katzie culture, Pierre came to the MEd program with many years of experience working for non-profits and public education in the areas of Indigenous and adult education. But there was a time as a young adult when he struggled to envision himself at university.

“I was about 17 years old, and my Aboriginal school worker took us—me and some of my cousins who also grew up on Katzie First Nation—on tours of local universities like UBC and SFU. I remember being wide-eyed and having a kind of hesitation, that I would never make my way through the front doors. It was honestly really hard. I struggled throughout all of my academic studies. I ultimately built up my work experience in the non-profit and education sectors—that, in addition to all my learning around Indigenous initiatives, education, culture, history, and activism, led me to doing my MEd.”

Although colonialism and its legacy have barred many Indigenous people from safely accessing their culture, language, family and elders, Pierre has been immersed in his Katzie Coast Salish culture from birth. Being surrounded by elders, knowledge keepers, and rich spiritual and cultural educators has helped him stay grounded and connected as a Katzie First Nation person.

Before he came to SFU, Pierre worked as an Aboriginal Education Assistant for the Surrey School District and amassed experience in Indigenous education and program leadership within various organizations, including the First Nations Health Authority, Fraser Health Authority, and the Canadian Centre for Mental Health and Addiction. When peers from Vancouver Community College suggested he check out SFU, Pierre decided to apply and was accepted.

“My time in the MA program was transformational, in the fullest sense of the word. It changed who I am as an educator and facilitator, but it was also transformative in light of the events that were happening at the time which paved the way for important classroom conversations...”

Though he initially struggled with imposter syndrome, Pierre says conversations with new colleagues within the first couple weeks of the program affirmed that his experience, ideas and perspective would be important contributions to future conversations about knowledge, access, and the necessity of institutional transformation.

“My time in the MA program was transformational, in the fullest sense of the word. It changed who I am as an educator and facilitator, but it was also transformative in light of the events that were happening at the time which paved the way for important classroom conversations: the very first National Truth and Reconciliation Day; the



Len Pierre

initial findings of 215 children in unmarked graves on the grounds of a residential school in Kamloops; a report confirming and highlighting the vast amount of systemic-racism in B.C.’s health care system. All these things happened while I was in this program, and were a big part of widespread societal and national conversations.”

As educators and emerging leaders in a place of learning, Pierre says he and his peers had, and still have, a critical responsibility to engage in difficult conversations, address events and systemic inequities, and work together toward real change.

Having access to a wide variety of leaders in the program made all the difference, Pierre says. By listening to and sharing leadership strategies that were successful in so many different contexts—his peers and professors come from diverse backgrounds including trades, technology, media, anthropology, aesthetics, and even dentistry—Pierre was able to build what he calls “promising practices, principles, and philosophies” into the foundation of his own approach to working with clients.

As an SFU alumnus, Pierre sees himself as an unofficial SFU Indigenous ambassador. He has kept in touch with many peers and professors, and has been invited to give guest lectures and workshops for many different departments and faculties at the university.

“I have a lot of pride, responsibility, and sense of community in being an SFU alumnus,” says Pierre. “You will find so many new connections and work from being a part of this wonderful community long after you’ve graduated from your program.”

When asked what words of wisdom he would offer to future Indigenous alumni, Pierre encourages his peers to take up space and use their voice.

“We need you. You belong here. Your voice and presence matter,” he says. “Be patient with yourself, and be patient with the systems we all live within. Though it’s sporadic and feels so slow at times, know that change is happening.”



Honoring Indigenous Leadership at SFU

Michelle Good

During the fall 2022 convocation ceremony, SFU bestowed an Honorary Doctor of Letters, honoris causa on Michelle Good, a Cree author, lawyer and advocate who shares the trauma and hardships faced by residential school survivors so that this history is not forgotten and the ongoing impact no longer be ignored. Her work is vital to the path of reconciliation and decolonization.

Alanaise Ferguson and George Nicholas honoured as 2022 Distinguished SFU Professors

From protecting our planet by challenging conventional notions about ecosystem resiliency, to dismantling social and structural factors that limit our sexual and mental health, SFU's 2022 Distinguished SFU Professors are tackling some of the most pressing issues impacting our local, national and global communities.

Recognized for their exceptional performance and distinguished accomplishments relative to their rank and years of service, the 2022 recipients fuel research discoveries, drive social innovation and seek sustainable solutions to help change our world.

Dr. Alanaise Ferguson and George Nicholas are two of nine SFU researchers honoured as the latest Distinguished SFU Professors, bringing the total to 31 awarded scholars since the program's inception in 2019.

The Distinguished SFU Professor Program is a joint initiative of the Provost and Vice-President Academic and the Vice-President, Research and International. The Distinguished SFU Professor title comes with a special requirement for members to share their work with the public through events such as lectures, panels and presentations.



Dr. Alanaise Ferguson is an Indigenous scientist-practitioner and educator in counselling psychology. Her work aims to decolonize mental health practices by addressing serious manifestations of colonial violence such as gang and gender-based violence. As one of very few Indigenous registered psychologists in B.C., she maintains active service within several Indigenous communities. Ferguson produces work considered meaningful to psychological practice in the areas of identity reclamation, collective healing and restitution from damaging colonial processes including Indian Residential schools. Her work attracted the attention of the Mental Health Commission of Canada, The National Parole Board of Canada, and the National Headstart Association of Canada.



George Nicholas studies the evolving relationship between archaeology and Indigenous communities, intellectual property and intangible heritage, and the archaeology and human ecology of wetlands. He advances Indigenous heritage protection, social justice and decolonization. He developed and directed SFU's Indigenous Archaeology Program on the Tk'emlups Reserve in Kamloops — the first of its kind in North America. Nicholas' commitment to reconciliation and decolonization is evidenced in his work with the SFU-Aboriginal Reconciliation Council, the Indigenous Research Institute's advisory board and the First Peoples Cultural Council. He directed the international Intellectual Property in Cultural Heritage (IPinCH) project (2008-2016). In 2021, he received the Warren Gill Award for Community Impact.



Sim'oogit Ni'isjoohl (Chief Earl Stephens) and Noxs Ts'aawit (Dr. Amy Parent) stand with the Ni'isjoohl memorial pole in the National Museum of Scotland on August 22, 2022. Photo Credit: Neil Hanna

Indigenous leaders welcome historic repatriation of stolen Nisga'a memorial totem pole

SFU education professor and Canada Research Chair Amy Parent was among Indigenous leaders who traveled to Scotland in August to discuss repatriation of a long-stolen memorial totem pole—a journey that recently led to an agreement for its return home.

Parent, whose Nisga'a name is Sigidimnak Noxs Ts'aawit (Mother of the Raven Warrior Chief), led the delegation with Chief Ni'isjoohl (Earl Stephens) and Shawna Mackay from the House of Ni'isjoohl. The Nisga'a delegation was supported by Hlgu Aama Gat, Donald Leeson (Chief Councillor Laxgalt'sap Village Government), Apdii Laxha, Andrew Robinson (Nisga'a Lisims industry relations manager), Mmihlgum Maakskwhl Gakw (Pamela Brown), and Theresa Schober (Nisga'a Museum curator and director) who acted as witnesses, speakers, and negotiators with the delegation.

The delegation's discussions with museum staff and the Government of Scotland resulted in an agreement to repatriate the totem pole three months later. The memorial totem pole will be returned to the House of Ni'isjoohl and will be placed in the Nisga'a Museum with transport plans to be finalized in the new year.

In a Q&A interview, Parent, who holds SFU's Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Education and Governance, discusses the journey to this historic decision, why it is culturally significant and how it will advance reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.

What is the importance of this project for education and reconciliation?

It is a precedent-setting project for the international Indigenous community in terms of repatriation of a totem pole out of the United Kingdom.

It will be the first time we see a totem pole come out of the UK and only the second time in history that a totem pole has been returned or repatriated from Europe. It is also the first time that our nation has seen the return of a pole to our motherlands from an international museum.

It is one large step forward for our family and nation's healing journey. It is one small step forward for the reparative work that is required of all museums with imperial and colonial legacies to begin returning Indigenous people's cultural treasures that have been stolen, if we want to begin decolonizing our institutions.



There's a story and a history connected to the memorial totem pole; can you tell us more about that?

The pole itself is a family memorial pole. As Nisga'a peoples you are born into your Wilp or house structure, which is considered to be an extended family. From there we are divided into four matrilineal clans, which are based on different animals — for example, I am from the House of Ni'isjoohl and am a member of the Ganada (frog) clan.

We would have a house pole in front of our longhouse to tell a story of our house and our ownership to our lands and our waterways since time immemorial. The carved crests in the pole also specify names that are carried by family members in a house; and convey our relationships with animals and supernatural beings on our house territory.

The House of Ni'isjoohl is one of approximately 50 houses within the Nisga'a Nation. The Ni'isjoohl memorial pole is a house pole that was carved and erected in the 1860s. The pole tells the story of Ts'wawit, a warrior who was next in line to be chief before he was killed in a conflict with a neighbouring Nation.

The house pole, like others carved in the Nisga'a carving tradition, represents a chapter of the Peoples' cultural sovereignty, and is a living constitutional and visual record. The pole holds significant knowledge within its carvings, and will serve as a form of curriculum for the next generation of Nisga'a citizens to learn our oral history.

The pole was situated in one of our ancient villages known as Ankida'a and in 1929 it was one of several poles stolen by colonial ethnographer Marius Barbeau, with the Ni'isjoohl pole being sold to the Royal Scottish Museum (now National Museum of Scotland). Nisga'a Chief Duuk (William Moore) and I co-wrote a chapter drawing from oral history and historical records to provide a more detailed account of the story of the pole's theft for the book called [Scotland's Transnational Heritage, Legacies of Empire and Slavery](#).

What was it like to see this long-stolen cultural treasure for the first time?

A strong mixture of emotions was definitely present for us, in terms of the strategy we had to enact both culturally and politically. The protocols that we needed to carry out spiritually for the pole were quite significant. We were really grateful to have strong collaboration with our local village, the Laxgalt'ap Village government and the Nisga'a Lisims Government who also sent negotiators and representatives with us.

We came into the museum in full regalia, singing and drumming. We set the agenda and informed them that we were there based on our laws to have a Nation-to-Nation discussion.

We hope to inspire others and recognize that what might seem impossible is possible when it comes to repatriation. Justice for our ancestors will prevail.

We could feel the pole's presence — its living spirit inside. We were there to wake up that spirit and connect with our ancestors. We could feel a sigh of relief as we walked into that room. We invited museum staff to be present to see and feel the impact of the pole's removal on our family and witness the emotions that we experienced.

We spoke to the pole in our language and carried out a ceremony, fed it with traditional foods from our territory, sang the Nisga'a peace song and provided the museum staff with witness gifts before proceeding with formal negotiations and discussions. We were also invited to give a formal presentation at the University of St. Andrews.

We had to leave with a promise committed to us but that was not on paper yet. We had to leave after being reconnected with a family member that had been gone for over 90 years — the emotions certainly hit me as we said goodbye.

When we returned home there was unanimous agreement in our house that the pole would be returned to the Nisga'a Museum in the village of Laxgalt's'ap. The next three months involved discussions with four different governments and two museums and working through all these different laws.

We had an incredibly strong team who worked together with our minds and hearts as one. I'm absolutely grateful for the continued support that we have collectively received from many people inside and outside our nation.

What are the next steps in the repatriation process and when the pole will be coming home?

The legal considerations around the transfer of legal title of the pole and its transport will be discussed in January. We also need to meet with the Nisga'a Museum conservators to figure out the best season, in terms of humidity and temperature, to take the glass windows of the front of the building and accommodate the totem pole. Our family and nation will also need time to prepare a feast in accordance with our protocols, laws and traditions.

You mentioned making history, can you talk about the global interest in the memorial pole's repatriation and how this may indicate or influence a shift in thinking about history and culture?

We have been incredibly appreciative of the media who have been really strong advocates for its return. You can never really predict what's going to happen. We were grateful to get a grant that allowed the majority of the delegation to travel to Scotland. We were determined to have the pole returned to us but we weren't sure what kind of conversation we were going to have with the museum or the Scottish government.

Given the history of repatriation practices in the UK we were advised not to set our expectations too high. We also didn't know if the pole was going to be in good enough condition to be moved. We hope to inspire others and recognize that what might seem impossible is possible when it comes to repatriation. Justice for our ancestors will prevail.

We were heartened to see that the UK agreed to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which was part of our argument that as signatories to UNDRIP they needed to enact that in meaningful ways. We've also been really appreciative of our treaty partners, the government of Canada and the province who have been advocates with us in this process and have been standing beside us.

Celebrating the launch of the Snuneymuxw language learning hub



At the invitation of the Snuneymuxw First Nation, representatives from SFU's Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) travelled to Nanaimo in July 2022 to witness the opening ceremony of the new Snuneymuxw Learning Academy (SLA).

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Located in the building of a former elementary school, the new SLA will act as a language learning hub for Hul'q'umi'num' language learners as well as a site for community programming such as youth mentorship, plant medicine, and employment training. The creation of the academy is the culmination of partnerships between the Snuneymuxw First Nation, the Nanaimo Ladysmith School District, the [Hul'q'umi'num' Language & Culture Society](#), the University of Victoria, and SFU's [Indigenous Languages Program \(INLP\)](#).

“SLA was created with an understanding that the ancient knowledge systems of our great lands can only be fully appreciated by first knowing and recognizing the relationship between language, land and culture.”

According to a Snuneymuxw First Nation [press release](#), “SLA was created with an understanding that the ancient knowledge systems of our great lands can only be fully appreciated by first knowing and recognizing the relationship between language, land and culture.” The statement goes on to say, “The knowledge of the land expressed through Hul'q'umi'num' is critical to maintaining the continuity of Indigenous knowledge systems.”

While the ceremony was aimed at celebrating the launch of the SLA, it was also a community event to showcase the progress achieved by the students in the language programs. Conducted entirely in Hul'q'umi'num', the ceremony featured performances by SFU INLP students. On stage, the students performed songs, poem readings, and a play titled *hw'ittsus lhq'el'ts'* (Jealous Moon) which was written by [Christopher Alphonse](#), a graduate of the [Diploma in Indigenous Language Proficiency](#) program.

“It was meaningful for the older members of the community to witness the performances as it showed how much the younger community members had worked on preserving and learning the language,” says FASS Director of Indigenous Relations Tim Michel, who was among the SFU delegation present at the opening ceremony. “I was impressed with the range of abilities that the students had. Although some were a little shaky, they exhibited good facility with the language and performed admirably.”

Inspired by the students' efforts and tenacity to speak and perform in Hul'q'umi'num', Michel delivered his opening speech in his Secwepemctsin mother tongue. Upon returning from Nanaimo, he also enrolled to audit an INLP course based out of his hometown of Chase, and plans to join another conversational language course next term.

Linguistics professor and INLP associate director [Donna Gerds](#) also spoke at the ceremony, giving recognition to the monumental work the community has put forward to make the SLA a reality. While Gerds and professor [Marianne Ignace](#) have been instrumental in creating Indigenous languages programming, it is important to acknowledge the individuals in the communities themselves who with great pride in their heritage and language, have advanced this programming further by making it their own.

The opening of the SLA marks the second language hub SFU has formed in collaboration with Indigenous communities and organizations. The first being the [Shhwulmuhwqun Language](#) House in Duncan, B.C. with the Hul'q'umi'num' Language & Culture Society.

Since 1993, SFU INLP has partnered with communities to offer courses in 18 Indigenous languages from across B.C. and Yukon, including Hul'q'umi'num' which is a Coast Salish language spoken along the shores of the Salish Sea. This fall, the newly opened SLA will host the 2022-23 cohort of the program's Hul'q'umi'num' [Certificate in Indigenous Language Proficiency](#). INLP's diploma program, minor in Indigenous Languages Program, and masters in Indigenous Languages and Linguistics are also offered on site at the new centre.

Addressing Food Security in Klemtu



Community garden (in Klemtu)

As the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted, food supply chains can be extremely fragile. The pandemic, especially, has shown how important having a local food source is to the food security of remote communities. According to the First Nations Food, Nutrition and Environment Study, 48% of First Nations households are food insecure. Access to fresh, nutritious, and culturally appropriate foods can be a challenge for many First Nations communities both due to economic reasons and remote locations.

The Nutrition through Engagement and Agricultural Technologies (N-EAT) project works to support creating sustainable food systems in partnership and full collaboration with First Nations communities.

A Pacific Water Research Centre project, coordinated through the Faculty of Applied Sciences, N-EAT comes up with and implements solutions for food security by offering organizational and logistical support, assisting with mobilizing financial resources, and building local capacity. Engaging children and youth in these endeavours is an important element.

Currently, the project has an existing partnership with the Kitasoo/ Xai'xais First Nation in Klemtu, BC and is in conversation with two other First Nations communities and potential partners British Columbia. The N-EAT project is constantly working with new innovative technology to improve food sovereignty in remote communities. For example, in Klemtu, the project is facilitating the procurement of a Growcer unit, which is a shipping container that is climate controlled and can grow food all year round in a hydroponic system.

The project's main objective is to build food security by working and collaborating with remote communities but, in practice, it does more than that. The project works closely with the local school in Klemtu, engages with volunteers, the local grocery store and tourism lodge, and organizes community engagement events that help to build capacity around growing food and nutrition education. The success of this project relies heavily on the hard work of the Klemtu Community Garden Coordinator, other Kitasoo Band staff members, and so many awesome community members whose support has made such a positive impact on this work.

The project works with the community to incorporate traditional food harvesting practices as well as creates an opportunity and space where intergenerational knowledge transfers can happen. Co-founder and former project coordinator Sarah Pickering notes that working in the community garden “gives people a sense of pride that they are taking care of their community in a way that is healthy” and “people feel ownership over the food that they’re able to provide for their communities”.

“[The community garden] gives people a sense of pride that they are taking care of their community in a way that is healthy...”

In 2020, the project secured Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) funding and the N-EAT team was able to engage a SFU Master's student to do a project evaluation and identify ways to improve on their work in Klemtu and make more informed decisions when working with other First Nations communities. The funding is also helping support staff at the Klemtu Community Garden and allows the project to continue working with an experienced Ethnobotanist with years of experience in the Kitasoo and Xai'xais territories.

In May 2022, the N-EAT project was also awarded a \$165,000 grant by the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) as part of its 2022 North American Partnership for Environmental Community Action (NAPECA) grant program. The funding will enable N-EAT to enhance its ongoing activities aimed at building food security and resilience for remote Indigenous communities in BC.



Kitasoo/Xai'xais Big House (in Klemtu)

SFU Launches Centre for Collaborative Action on Indigenous Health Governance



Dr. Jeffrey Reading, Dr. Krista Stelkia, and Anita Manshadi

The Centre for Collaborative Action on Indigenous Health Governance (CCAIHG) officially welcomes Dr. Krista Stelkia and Dr. Jeffrey Reading as interim Co-Directors at the new research centre based in the Faculty of Health Sciences at SFU. This Indigenous-led research centre is a hub for collaborative dialogue on Indigenous approaches to health and wellness in the context of Indigenous health governance. The Centre brings together communities, first nations, researchers, students, and health leaders to share ideas, knowledge, and develop strategies for governance towards advancing the health and wellness of Indigenous peoples locally, nationally, and globally. The Centre's unique partnership with First Nations Health Authority and SFU supports the team's partnership initiatives through community engagement and developing a governing council in 2023.

As SFU's new Indigenous health governance research centre, Indigenous mentorship is a key priority. Coming together by learning, exchanging lived experiences, knowledges, cultural values, and protocols with future generations who aspire to explore and lead research within their own communities is integral to the Centre's work. The Centre welcomes Indigenous students, emerging scholars, and community members to be a part of the Centre's diverse and community-grounded research initiatives.

Please contact our Research Manager, Anita Manshadi at indigenoushealthgovcentre@sfu.ca who can support your inquiries.

Stepping stones: SFU's Indigenous Business Leadership EMBA brings Indigenous ways of learning into the business world

The importance of having Indigenous role models—both for herself and her daughter—is what drew Joanne Stone-Campbell to SFU [Beedie's Indigenous Business Leadership Executive MBA](#) (IBL EMBA) program. Having encountered negative experiences throughout her school years, she never thought she would have the positive experience that she did in SFU Beedie's IBL EMBA program—let alone learn from actual Indigenous professors.

Stone-Campbell, who is Anishinaabe, grew up in an isolated First Nations community in northern Ontario called Michipicoten with a population of around 50. Both her parents had served in leadership roles as elected chiefs of the community. Her father pushed the importance of education, believing that it was the tool to understanding and living in both worlds—the Indigenous and the non-Indigenous. As a result, she was the first in her community to graduate from high school and go on to post-secondary education.

“I wanted to teach my daughter to have role models and to give her some inspiration, too, so that she has stepping stones to follow her own passions and dreams.”

“I didn't have many mentors in the area of education,” says Stone-Campbell. “My father went to residential school and he passed away when he was 51. I wanted to teach my daughter to have role models and to give her some inspiration, too, so that she has stepping stones to follow her own passions and dreams.”

Two values have helped guide Stone-Campbell throughout her life: education and community service. At age 10, she had her own little schoolhouse where she taught kids in her community art, reading and math. With her father's support and insistence on education, she went on to enrol in Sault College at 17, where she graduated with a diploma in development services. She volunteered as a parole officer at 19 and then was appointed a Justice of the Peace at 20.

Staying true to her values, she came home and took a job at the local college helping adults with disabilities. It was during this time that she took on a second full-time job where she helped build a women's crisis centre and served as a support worker. Eventually, she went on to work for nearly three decades in education—first Sault College, Vancouver School Board and then at BCIT—while also volunteering as a personal growth facilitator.

With her daughter graduating high-school and going into post-secondary, Stone-Campbell decided to also go back to school. After researching executives' and VPs' education, she chose SFU Beedie's IBL EMBA program. It far exceeded her expectations.

Growing up, Stone-Campbell had very negative school experiences. Students from the reserve frequently encountered racism and bullying. Although she was the first generation of her family to not attend residential school, Stone-Campbell still felt trapped in a traumatic school environment where she faced name-calling and physical assaults daily. Administrators asked her to quit school and get a job in grade 10. She had to fight to graduate in grade 12 along with everyone else. With all the negative experiences in her education, Stone-Campbell surprised herself by going back to school—and she was glad she did.

“Going into this executive MBA with an Indigenous cohort and being able to contribute my own life learning and having people understand me was incredible,” says Stone-Campbell. “Being able to learn from my own people, experiencing their journeys, and learning from Indigenous professors was amazing. I could have cried every day in my class—it was such a healing journey for me through positive education.”

Stone-Campbell was especially glad to have a professor who was also Anishinaabe—Dr. John Borrows. “For him to come into class and share a song, share the language, share the story from my home area, and for him to be Indigenous—it was so impactful,” says Stone-Campbell. “To have one of my people be in such a leadership role, so educated—he was huge in my books.”

Her cohort also took a trip down to the University of Arizona in Tucson, AZ, where they met and studied with more Indigenous professors over an additional six courses. At the end of the program, they received the Certificate of Indigenous Governance along with their MBA degree.

The program gave Stone-Campbell a chance to collaborate with other Indigenous professionals and think about ways to incorporate Indigenous ways of knowing and priorities around reconciliation into business and the world of work.

“They're Indigenous lawyers, Indigenous executives, Indigenous accountants, and just sharing their wealth of knowledge is what excites me—that Indigenous knowledge,” says Stone-Campbell. “I learned so much about how I can weave this knowledge into my workplace or where I want to go as a leader. How do we bring Indigenous values into our work?”

Stone-Campbell is now an Indigenous Portfolio Manager, Community Investment at Vancity Credit Union.

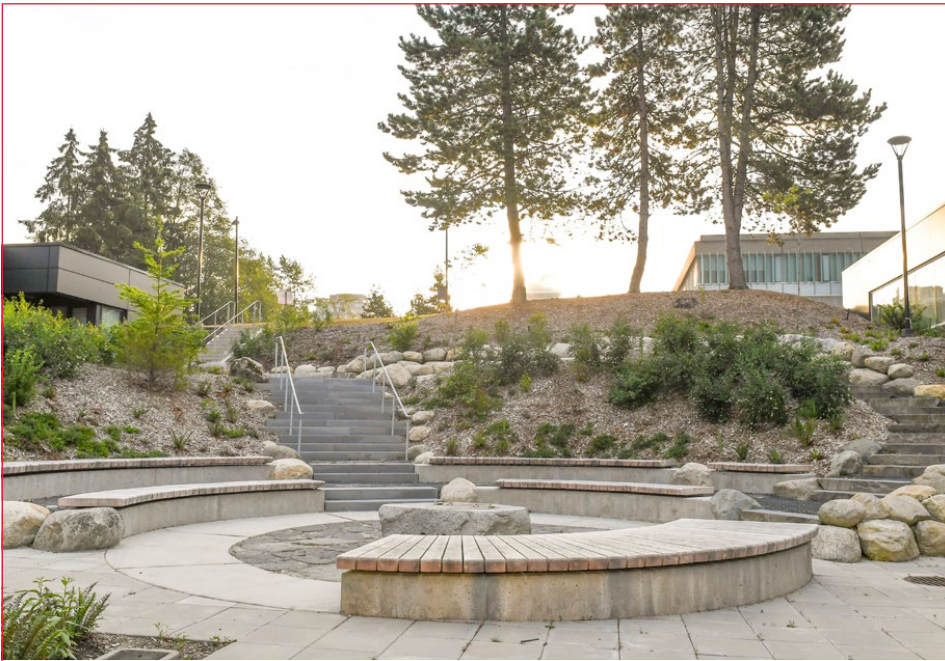
“I'm looking forward to the next five years of my life and being fully connected, passionate and living each day doing what I love and on purpose,” says Stone-Campbell.

“Having an MBA gives you more control of your life and destination, and more opportunity. You don't have to settle for less.”

“I learned so much about how I can weave this knowledge into my workplace or where I want to go as a leader...”



Joanne Stone-Campbell



Future space of the Indigenous Garden and Outdoor Classroom at Burnaby campus. A ceremonial opening is planned for 2023.

A Glimpse of the Indigenous Outdoor Classroom and Garden

Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing are interconnected with the land. SFU’s new Indigenous Garden and Outdoor Classroom will be a welcoming place-based learning space at the Burnaby campus that honours Indigenous pedagogy. The work began in June 2020 with the awakening and blessing of the ground by the Tsleil-Waututh Nation knowledge holders. In fall 2021, the Faculty of Education organized a tour of the UBC Indigenous Garden and a meeting with Indigenous ethnobotanist T’uy’t’anat Cease Wyss, to discuss a planting plan for supporting an emerging Indigenous ethnobotany curriculum. There are ongoing discussions about collaborating with Indigenous artists on future installations (including the Residential School Memorial Wall), and on plans for a ceremonial opening in 2023.

First Peoples’ Gathering House Update

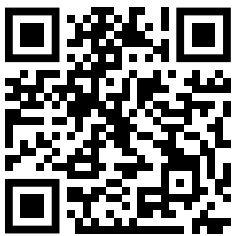
Construction is now underway for the First Peoples’ Gathering House. Supported by Indigenous host communities, the First Peoples’ Gathering House is designed as a shared gathering space for ceremonies, cultural events, celebrations, workshops and sharing knowledge.

This past April, the City of Burnaby provided \$5 million towards the completion of this project. Acting Mayor Sav Dhaliwal announced the funding at a formal event at the site, together with Indigenous, provincial and municipal government, and university leaders.

The legacy of the First Peoples’ Gathering House extends beyond the current students, staff and visitors to provide a safe and welcoming space for future generations at SFU. Completion is planned for 2024. Sign up to get monthly updates on the project using the QR code below.



Indigenous, provincial and municipal government, and university leaders gather at the April funding recognition event.



Sign up to get monthly updates on the project



Exterior rendering of the First Peoples’ Gathering House (facing towards the north), slated to be complete in 2024.

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