Driving change across Canada and around the world.

U Vic law scholars are leading a quiet revolution in Canadian history

Working closely with Indigenous communities across the country, researchers at the University of Victoria are helping to re-establish Indigenous legal traditions and give them equal footing with Canadian common law.

"Law is the way people make decisions in their communities," says University of Victoria law scholar John Borrows. "One difference is that Indigenous people look to the land to find their principles for judgement, whereas common law looks to old cases to decide how to act in the future."

Reconciling these different cultures preoccupies Reconciling these different cultures preoccupies the country. This effort will benefit areas such as child Loppie, who is one of Canada's leading Indigenous law, says Borrows. Borrows. One difference is that Indigenous peoples look to the land to find their principles for judgement, whereas common law looks to old cases to decide how to act in the future.

"It's important to do this well because we have to work together; we all live on the same land and share this beautiful country," says Borrows. "To enjoy a healthy future, we need to be attentive to what the land itself has taught Indigenous peoples for thousands of years."

Borrows is currently working with law faculty colleague Val Napoleon to develop a joint degree in Indigenous legal orders and Canadian common law (JID) at UVic. It will be the first degree of its kind in the world.

The degree will train students to understand Indigenous legal orders, build institutions based on those orders, and design institutions and procedures that work in concert with other levels of Canadian law.


A matter of consumer trust

What "brands" are the most trustworthy? Which ones deliver the value and service you're looking for before you spend your hard-earned money?

Researchers in the Peter B. Gustavson School of Business at UVic are on the case. For the last three years they've produced the annual Gustavson Brand Trust Index, a handy guide to the brands most trusted by Canadians.

More than 1,000 consumers are asked to score 175 Canadian companies and brands in 17 industry sectors on a range of brand value measures. The results show how community engagement, relationship management and customer experience influence consumer trust.

At the top this year: Mountain Equipment Co-op, the Canadian Automobile Association and Costco for their close connections with communities and customers.


"I want to give back to the community"

When UVic's new civil engineering program launched in 2013 with a clear focus on sustainability and Indigenous communities, it caught the attention of girls.

The program's emphasis on making the best use of natural resources and lessening environmental burdens—green buildings, sustainable cities, industrial ecology and water resources—was immediately appealing.

Portiris had strong motivation for his choice. "As a single parent, one of my most important jobs is to be a role model to my daughter," he says. "I want her to grow up seeing me use my abilities to help people, and solve problems that affect our communities."

Portiris graduated the month as part of the program's inaugural class and plans to continue on to graduate studies. "I want to work on projects that create better housing for Indigenous communities, to be involved in engineering that's driven by the needs of society," he says.


Award fuels drive to be small-town family doctor

Sarah Khan has a distinct definition of the word "leadership."

"It means taking a step back to observe those around you and the situation," says the chemistry undergraduate. "You need to learn from that, adapt quickly and then move forward with the best plan of action."

Khan practiced this approach wherever she goes. It's earned her a prestigious 3M National Student Fellowship, a Schulich Leadership Scholarship, and $85,000 youth training program for the community.

Every project Khan takes on fits into her ultimate goal of becoming a family physician so that she can tackle the health care issues she saw growing up in Kiamsic, BC. "It's crucial when you're living in such an isolated place to feel that you're cared for," she says.


Research partnership tackles fentanyl crisis

With BC's drug overdose epidemic reaching record levels, health care provid

ers are seeking new tools to contain the crisis.

That's why, when UVic chemist Dennis Howe received a phone call last summer from a local pharmacist proposing an innovative partnership, he jumped on the opportunity.

Alan Vincent of STS Pharmacy wanted a way to detect and measure the levels of drugs that his clients were bringing in, particularly fentanyl, the deadly opioid involved in many of BC's drug overdose.

Since then, Howe and his student Nick Medgyesi have been working with Vincent to develop an inexpensive mobile detection device. The prototype they've developed measures how laser light interacts with a tablet, says Medgyesi. "Each drug has a unique molecular fingerprint, so we should be able to determine what drugs are present, and what concentration."

More info: bit.ly/uvic-howen