Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Master of Arts

of

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BA (University of Victoria, 2011)

“‘Nakhwanh Gwich’in Khehlok lidilii - We Are Our Own People’
Teetl’it Gwich’in Practices of Indigeneity: Connection to Land, Traditional Self-Governance, and Elements of Self Determination”

Department of Political Science

Tuesday, August 18, 2015
9:30AM
David Turpin Building
Room A136

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Heidi Stark, Department of Political Science, UVic (Supervisor)
Dr. James Tully, Department of Political Science, UVic (Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Michael Asch, Department of Anthropology, UVic

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Karena Shaw, School Environmental Studies, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract

This thesis examines the practices of Indigeneity, acts of Indigenous social and cultural traditions stemming from Teet’it Gwich’in land-based culture in the Northwest Territories. By emphasizing Teet’it Gwich’in philosophy, this project illustrates how Teet’it Gwich’in practices of Indigeneity are rooted in their social, physical, and cultural relationship with the land, which are central to Gwich’in self-determination. This thesis demonstrates traditional Teet’it Gwich’in self-governance practices are driven by cultural and social norms rooted in traditional knowledge, as well as contemporary Gwich’in-Canada relations. Utilizing knowledge collected from Teet’it Gwich’in elders, these first-hand accounts show the connection between Canada and the Teet’it Gwich’in through state policies that impede Teet’it Gwich’in self-determination. By examining these challenges to their cultural practices, Teet’it Gwich’in worldviews rooted in landbased practices is considered the basis for Gwich’in self-determination rooted in the physical and cultural landscape of Gwich’in lands.