

June 3, 2021

Dear faculty, staff and students of the Faculty of Graduate Studies,

I am writing to express the grief and horror of every member of the Dean's office at the news of the discovery by the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation of the remains of at least 215 children in unmarked graves on the site of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School.

This appalling discovery is another confirmation of what Indigenous communities have always known — that our country and its colonizing institutions have inflicted violence that continues to this day.

The devastating effects of the Residential School system are still being felt by Indigenous communities and must not be ignored or forgotten. We must face the truth of our history to move forward in reconciliation. No words or actions could ever begin to address the tragedy of children stripped from their homes in an attempt to alienate them from their cultures, their languages and their families, with many never to return and thousands of others suffering neglect and abuse.

We wish to extend our compassion and support to the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation in their grief, to the Indigenous students, faculty and staff in our own UVic community as well as those residential school survivors and their loved ones who continue to suffer from the ongoing effects of colonial violence across Canada. As faculty leadership, we are firm in our commitment to confront the colonial past and take action. We urge our researchers to reflect on how they can contribute to projects that reckon with the truths of the Residential School system and its ongoing impacts as a necessary foundation for the work of reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

We encourage those of you struggling with this news to contact one of:

- [UVic Counselling for Indigenous Students](#)
- [KUU-US Crisis Line](#)
- [Indian Residential School Survivors Society Crisis Line](#)

Sincerely, and with humility,

Steve Evans
Acting Dean