Notice of the Final Oral Examination for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy of

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“A Nuu-chah-nulth Approach to Disaster Resilience”

Department of Geography

December 15, 2017
10:00 A.M.
David Turpin Building
Room B215

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Denise Cloutier, Department of Geography, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. James Gardner, Department of Geography, UVic (Member)
Dr. Mark Seemann, Department of Geography, UVic (Member)
Dr. Jeff Corntassel, Indigenous Governance Program, UVic (Outside Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Jeffrey Schiffer, Office of Indigenization, Justice Institute of British Columbia

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Adel Guitouni, Peter B. Gustavson School of Business, UVic

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

Over the course of history, and to this day, Indigenous peoples around the world have used their traditional knowledge to prepare for, cope with, and survive disasters (Hasan, 2016). For Indigenous communities, this locally bound knowledge is acquired from intergenerational experience, study, sharing and observation, and as such, it becomes a critical component in the development of a strategy for disaster resilience (Chakrabarti, 2009; Resture, 2009; Rotarangi and Russell, 2009; Trosper, 2003). The purpose of this dissertation is to work with the Nuu-chah-nulth First Nation, which consist of several Indigenous community on the west coast of Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada to understand Nuu-chah-nulth knowledge and strategies for disaster resilience, and how they can inform a shift in cultural understanding within the field of practice of emergency management.

Given the exploratory nature of this research project, a descriptive approach is used based upon Indigenous methodologies and the methodologies of narrative analysis to explore: a Nuu-chah-nulth approach to disaster resilience as well as the impacts of colonialism on the disaster resilience of the Nuu-chah-nulth people.

The findings of this research explore the ways that a Nuu-chah-nulth way of knowing informs and reflects their own capacities towards disaster resilience. From oral histories to traditional governance, and to the impacts of colonialism. Ultimately, this dissertation supports a call to action for emergency management practitioners to embrace an Indigenous approach to emergency management when working with First Nation communities. By advocating for the inclusion and the importance of bringing an Indigenous worldview into the lexicon of emergency management practices and the dialogue on disaster resilience, this research supports the Nuu-chah-nulth First Nation recognizing that their own knowledge is a powerful tool for supporting and enhancing their communities’ resilience to disaster.