



**University  
of Victoria**

Graduate Studies

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

of

**MAVIS UNDERWOOD**

BA (University of Victoria, 1978)

**“The Education of an Indigenous Woman: The Pursuit of Truth, Social Justice, and Healthy Relationships in a Coast Salish Context”**

Indigenous Governance Program

Thursday, April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
10:00 a.m.

Saanich Indian School Board Building - IFS Room  
7449 West Saanich Road  
Brentwood Bay

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Taiaiake Alfred, Indigenous Governance Program, University of Victoria (Supervisor)  
Dr. Devi Mucina, Indigenous Governance Program, UVic (Co-Supervisor)

External Examiner:

Dr. Nick Claxton, Department of Indigenous Education, UVic

Chair of Oral Examination:

Dr. Mandeep Mucina, School of Child and Youth Care, UVic

Dr. Stephen Evans, Acting Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies

## **Abstract**

In 1951 British Columbia public schools opened their doors to First Nations children furthering federal government goals of assimilation. First Nations learners entered provincial public schools as a “billable commodity” while newcomers flooded British Columbia seeking opportunities in a province rich in natural resources in forests, mines, fisheries, and land. Sadly the public schools’ curricula contained colonization history but no curriculum to describe First Nations existence and history. Locally, there was no recognition of the existence of the Coast Salish people as distinct and prosperous Saltwater People. The indifference to the history of indigenous peoples left newcomers with gaps in their understanding of First Peoples. Hostilities and resentments grew as immigration multiplied the numbers and pressure of homesteaders encroaching on traditional indigenous homelands paired with increasing intrusion and restrictions under the Indian Act and shrinking of traditional territories to small contained reserves.