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

CHRISTINE BIRD

MA (University of Victoria, 2015)
BA (University of Winnipeg, 1994)

“Indigenous Women’s Governance & The Doorways of Consent”

Indigenous Governance Program

Tuesday, March 31, 2020
3:00 P.M.
Clearihue Building
Room B019

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Devi Mucina, Indigenous Governance Program, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Noelani Goodyear–Kaʻōpua, Indigenous Governance Program, UVic (Member)
Dr. Noenoe Silva, Department of Political Science, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa (Outside Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Dian Million, Department of American Indian Studies, University of Washington

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Kim Juniper, School of Earth and Ocean Sciences, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
The purpose of this research is to identify models of Indigenous governance: that respects Indigenous women’s ability to govern; is grounded in a sacred relationship with the land and water; and one that engages language and culture to guide the process. Focusing on three distinct land-based resurgence movements, including the Áse Ti Tewá:ton Program in the Onkwenhonwe (Mohawk) community of Akwesasne; and the Hui Mālama ike Ala ‘Ulili Program in the Kanaka community of Koholālele in Pa’auilo (Hilo, Hawaii), it is the intention of this research to understand how these communities are consciously and critically engaging ways that restore their sacred relationship to the land and water; the manner in which they are developing sustainable practices that restore traditional food and educational systems; and methods of developing the critical skills needed to address a contemporary colonial reality. Research considers existing scholarship, community-based practice and Indigenous knowledge to create an understanding of the traditional/ancestral governance practices being generated through these land-based resurgence movements. Through a comparative analysis, this research will seek to understand how each of these communities are using Indigenous language, culture and their relationship to the land as a foundation for restoring ancestral ways of thinking, being and doing, that underlie a traditional governance model. The teachings I have gained through doing this research have given me an understanding of community-based strategies that we can use to move away from an external, violent, dependency-creating style of governance that is consistent with Western political approaches to a system of Indigenous governance that upholds Indigenous traditions of agency, leadership, decision-making and diplomacy.