ČAMEUEL OL Consultative Process

The idea to use the SENĆOŦEN teaching ČAMEUEL OL or “Work Together” arose primarily from reviewing the Indigenous Academic plan as part of the Competency Model’s Strategic Document Review. In theming components of the various documents this teaching resonated as a unique and special way of summarizing the concepts of collaboration, consultation, teamwork, building relationships, forging partnerships, and approaching difference from a place of allyship that were evident in many of the strategic documents, while also honouring the heritage of original people and place.

The HR Working Group requested a meeting with Ruth Young and Samantha Etzel of First People’s House to explore if it was possible to respectfully honour the spirit of the teaching without misappropriating the language, and to understand the difference between various translations and iterations of the teaching amongst different indigenous traditions. Ruth, Sam and Rob Hancock were also provided the opportunity to review the model of the language and provide feedback on ways to decolonize the language. From these interactions came the understanding that it is not just about selecting language, but gaining a knowledge of the teachings that underlie the words.

As a deeper understanding of the teaching was encouraged, Sam and Cara discussed the appropriate protocol for meeting with Elders, and arranged a subsequent meeting with John Elliot. A meeting was held at Lau’wel’new school where John shared part of the indigenous creation story that applies to this teaching, including both the common and prayer names of five local types of Salmon and their representation of familial ties, seasonal movements, community bonds, and the value to everyone that comes from people working hard together. Like the salmon who go out and return as families, working together involves all of us working hard to take care of the future, to be of one mind in the best way we can, and to share in our resources and workload out of a sense of relationship and mutual accountability. When we go out together with a joint purpose and respect for the work we do, we come back stronger and united.

The learnings and stories from this meeting were shared back with the Cross Campus Advisory Team where it was determined that part of the power of using this teaching in the Competency Model, will be in our ability to share the stories of community, hope, collaboration that go along with it.

Questions and Continued Consultation

Ongoing consultation continues to ensure the intentions of the language are honoured and transmitted with respect. Questions about this process can be directed to Organization Development & Learning Services odl1@uvic.ca or the First People’s House.