



University  
of Victoria

Human & Social  
Development

# Research Conversations

## Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni (Indigenous Women) and Leadership

**Robina Thomas, PhD**

**Associate Professor, School of Social Work**

**Faculty of Human and Social Development, University of Victoria**

**February 1, 2012 | 12:00 pm - 1:30 pm**

**HSD A373**

### **Presentation Synopsis:**

Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni (Indigenous Women) have, since time immemorial, played critical leadership roles in Indigenous communities. However, with the imposition of racist/sexist colonial policies, indigenous women's roles were systematically displaced. As a result of these policies, which formalized colonial governance systems, the vital informal leadership roles the Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni play rarely get recognized. This presentation will honour (or stand up) the women in our communities who continue to embrace their important roles as givers of life and carriers of culture. Specifically, I will focus on teachings that 13 women passed on to me about the importance of keeping the Past, Present and Future connected. This is the Sacred Cycle and it is necessary to pass on these teachings for the future generations.

*'I ce:p'uw'eli'al Siem*

*Antha Qwul'sih'yah'maht*

*Te ne sun Lyackson, Snux'ney'muxw, Sto:lo*

*Hay chq a Lekwungun Mustimuxw*

*Hay chq a Ta't Mustimuxw*

In Hul'qumi'num I have said "welcome" and asked "how are you all doing?" My name is Qwul'sih'yah'maht and I am Lyackson, Snux'ney'muxw and Sto:lo. I also acknowledged and thanked the Lekwungun people for allowing me to live, laugh and love on their traditional territory. Lastly, for all of the teachings, I give thanks to the Ancestors – the olden day's people.

**Qwul'sih'yah'maht (Robina Thomas)** is Lyackson of the Coast Salish Nation. Associate Professor in the School of Social Work, Robina holds a BSW, MSW, and a PhD in Indigenous Governance.

Robina is committed to Indigenous education and her research interests include Storytelling, Residential Schools and Uy'skwuluwun: On Being Indigenous. She is committed to understanding anti-racism and anti-oppression and how these can be 'lived'.

