Ashley Charleson, a student in the Diploma in Indigenous Community Development and Governance program, graciously submitted her story:

ʔi kat chen skwish ala shíshálh, iy ala Daylu Dena. My ancestral name is ʔi kat, my English name is Ashley Charleson. I am from the shíshálh Nation on my father’s side and the Daylu Dena Nation on my mother’s side. I am married to my husband Jason Charleson from the Hesquiaht Nation and have 3 step children, Latrell, Brevin and Azayliah.

I am the Manager for the Employment Training and Post-secondary department of the shíshálh Nation, I’ve served as an elected councillor for my Nation and I am currently the Vice Chair for the Indigenous Adult Higher Learning Association (IAHLA) Board of Directors.

In this era of Truth and Reconciliation, the timing of taking the Indigenous Community Development and Governance Diploma program, in the School of Public Administration at the University of Victoria, is fitting. The knowledge and teachings learned through the ICDG Program have been enlightening and extremely relevant. Finally a program and curriculum that I see myself and my people reflected in. I will take what I’ve learned and apply it in my day-to-day work and to my community’s Nation Rebuilding endeavours in our pursuit of inherent self-determination, health and wellness for our people.