

X^wsepsəm (Esquimalt) Nation
Songhees Nation
University of Victoria
Relationship Protocol 2026

Presented by
Etalewtxw | ÁTOL,ÁUTW
Office of the Vice-President Indigenous



We acknowledge and respect the Ləkʷəŋən (Songhees and Xʷsepsəm/Esquimalt) Peoples on whose territory the university stands, and the Ləkʷəŋən and W̱SÁNEĆ Peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.



Territory Acknowledgement Video
[uvic.ca/ovpi/ways-of-knowing/
culture-and-protocol](http://uvic.ca/ovpi/ways-of-knowing/culture-and-protocol)



RELATIONSHIP PROTOCOL

This Relationship Protocol is made
as of the ____ day of February, 2026.

BETWEEN:

X^wsepsəm (ESQUIMALT) NATION
1189 Kosapsum Crescent
Victoria, BC V9A 7K7
("Esquimalt")

AND:

SONGHEES NATION
1100 Admirals Road
Victoria, BC V9A 2P6
("Songhees")
(collectively the "Nations")

AND:

UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA
3800 Finnerty Road
Victoria, BC V8P 5C2
(the "University")
(collectively the "Parties")

WHEREAS

- A. This Relationship Protocol (this "Protocol") reflects a shared commitment between the Parties to strengthen their relationship through collaboration, mutual respect and cultural understanding.
- B. Rooted in a spirit of reconciliation, this Protocol acknowledges the importance of advancing initiatives that benefit both the Nations and the University by focusing on creating meaningful and tangible outcomes.
- C. This Protocol outlines a framework for cooperation in areas of shared interest, including economic development, land stewardship, education, cultural revitalization and community well-being guided by lək^wəŋən values and principles.
- D. This Protocol serves as a living document intended to evolve through ongoing dialogue, reflecting the dynamic nature of this partnership as new opportunities arise and mutual understanding deepens.
- E. The Parties enter into this Protocol in the spirit of Naut'sa mawt ("together as one") with respect, humility and a commitment to learning from one another.

1. PURPOSE

1.1 We enter into this protocol to establish a framework and guide our collaboration in pursuit of shared goals. We commit to working together in the spirit of reconciliation on initiatives in economic development, land stewardship, education, community well-being, and cultural priorities.

2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

2.1 **Skʷes:** The ləkʷəŋən Laws and Philosophies:

The laws and philosophies of the ləkʷəŋən people will guide the work to be undertaken based on honoring and respecting the culture, heritage and traditions of the ləkʷəŋən people.

2.2 Primary Guiding Principles:

Through the acceptance and adoption of Skʷes, as the primary guiding principle, we agree to adhere to the following:

(a) **Nəc əmaat kʷəns čeʔi:** Working together/collaboration and reciprocity. We commit to working together for the benefit of our respective communities on initiatives that support our shared interests and achieve our mutually determined goals.

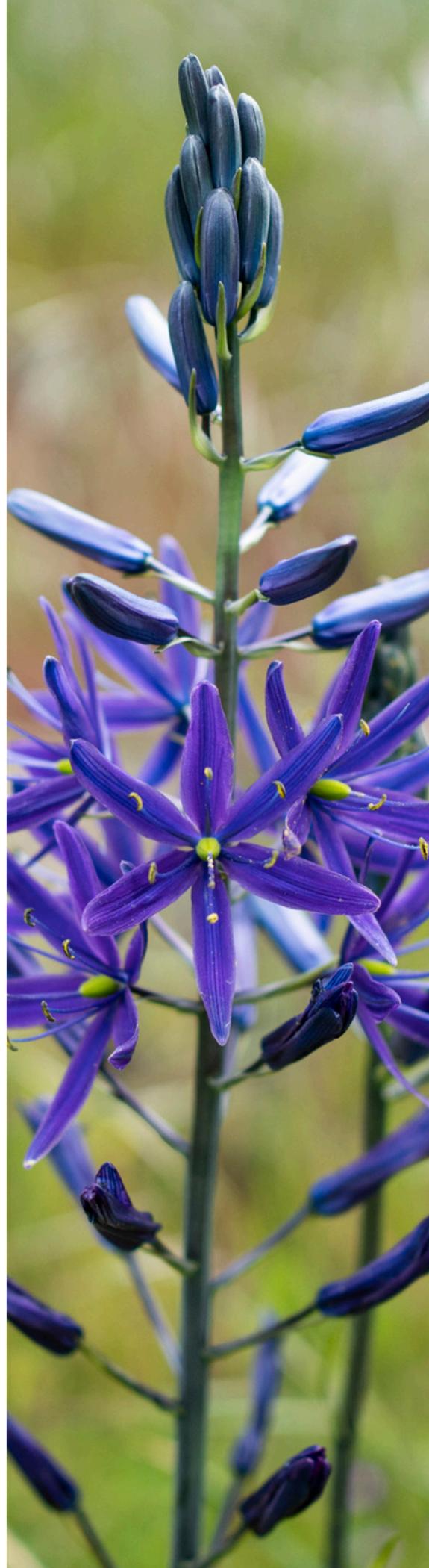
(b) **Nəw es šxʷ cən ʔəy šqʷeləqʷən:** Bring in your good heart and mind/good intent. We commit to bringing good hearts and minds to all our work and to working respectfully, honourably, and with courage.

(c) **Əəitqən:** Transparency, genuine, trustworthy and open/accountability. We commit to open and transparent communication and to honest and accountable actions and shared responsibility.

(d) **Xʷkʷənəŋistəl:** Commitment to reconciliation. This relationship is rooted in a shared commitment to reconciliation, with the purpose of achieving tangible benefits to the Nations and respecting Indigenous perspectives, protocols, and leadership.

(e) **Héʔəkʷ ʔə cə čələŋən ʔtə:** Remembering our ancestors and birthright/rooted wisdom. We honour the values of our ancestors, whose footsteps have marked this land for centuries and whose knowledge guides us as we lean on the teachings of our Elders, who move us forward in a good way.

(f) **Leʔt šxʷ helə ʔə cə mək ʷ sčəʔi səʔ:** Preparedness/readiness. We honour the teaching that reminds us that our present work prepares us for the responsibilities and opportunities ahead.





3. SHARED INTERESTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

3.1 We recognize that our collaboration is essential in creating opportunities to strengthen reconciliation, and advance our shared goals and achieve meaningful outcomes.

3.2 In pursuit of shared goals and meaningful reconciliation, we are prepared to explore opportunities for mutual benefits in the following areas:

(a) **Economic Development and Reconciliation:** Supporting mutually beneficial economic development initiatives that respect the Nations' rights, traditional values and community priorities, including, but not limited to, partnership on land use and capacity building programs.

(b) **Land Management Opportunities:** Identifying and facilitating initiatives related to land stewardship, development and design, and sustainable practices on the University lands that align with the Nations' interests, including, but not limited to, collaboration on land stewardship and management and supporting and promoting access to the University lands and spaces for ləkʷəŋən cultural practices.

(c) **Education Enrichment:** Enhancing pathways for the Nations' members to enroll in educational programs at the University while fostering culturally responsive learning environments and initiatives including language revitalization, cultural competency programs and the establishment of scholarships, internships, and customized career planning in fields for ləkʷəŋən students aligned with the Nations' priorities.

(d) **Employment and Skills Development:** Supporting workforce readiness by developing training and employment opportunities for the Nations' members through mutually beneficial initiatives.

(e) **Housing and ləkʷəŋən Spaces and Places:** Exploring opportunities to develop Indigenous student housing, member housing, and ləkʷəŋən spaces and places that meet the Nations' community needs including, but not limited to, collaborating on developing housing that aligns with the Nations' visions for sustainable, community focused housing solutions.

4. NATURE OF COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

4.1 Collaboration Approach:

To support our collaboration, we will:

- (a) designate representatives from each Party to sit on a working group, which will establish its own terms of reference and operating procedures by consensus;
- (b) meet quarterly to discuss new opportunities and progress and results on ongoing initiatives;
- (c) share information openly wherever possible, while respecting each Party's confidentiality requirements;
- (d) work to resolve any differences through dialogue and consensus-building; and
- (e) respect each Party's internal decision-making processes and timelines.

4.2 Annual Review and Reporting

The working group will meet at least once annually, or more frequently as desired, to review progress, assess the impact of this Protocol, and identify priorities for the coming year. This review will include reflecting on what is working well, identifying areas for improvement and adjusting approaches as needed to ensure continued alignment with shared goals.

4.3 Update:

As part of the Annual Review and Reporting process, the University will provide a formal update to the Nations' leadership by sharing key outcomes, seeking feedback, and inviting guidance on any areas where the partnership could be strengthened.

4.4 Cultural and Economic Protocols:

We will ensure all of our collaborative activities follow the Nations' cultural protocols. Where the Nations have different cultural protocols, the University will work with each Nation separately to ensure appropriate respect and adherence to their specific cultural protocols, including meaningful consultation with the Nations' leadership, Elders, staff and community representatives as appropriate.

4.5 Establishing Future Protocols:

Additional Protocols or agreements may be developed, as needed, to support specific initiatives or projects aligned with the spirit and intent of this Protocol.



5. TERM, RENEWAL AND AMENDMENTS

5.1 This Protocol will remain in effect from the date of signing and will be reviewed annually, and formally renewed at least every five years, or sooner if agreed upon by the Parties.

5.2 Any amendments must be agreed to in writing by each party.

5.3 This Protocol may be terminated by any party at any time, with 90 days' written notice. Upon termination, any ongoing initiatives or projects will be concluded in a manner agreed upon by all Parties.

5.4 This Protocol is non-binding and does not create, diminish or extinguish any legal rights for any of the Parties.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we, the undersigned Parties, have executed this Relationship Protocol as of the date and year first above written.





Chief Jerome Thomas
X^wsepsəm (Esquimalt) Nation



Songhees



Chief Ron Sam
Songhees Nation





Qwul'sih'yah'maht, Dr. Robina Thomas, President
University of Victoria

Etalewtxw | ÁTOL.ÁUTW
Office of the Vice-President Indigenous



Siwel'chilam, Dylan Thomas

uvic.ca/ovpi