

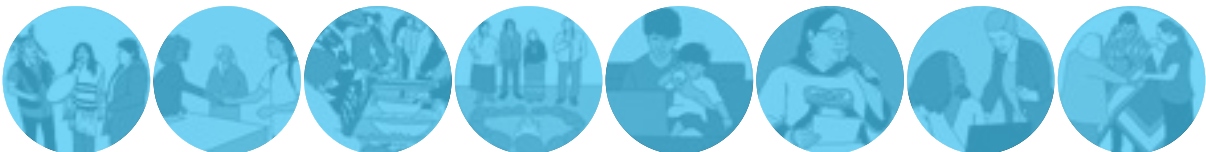


University of Victoria
**Centre for Indigenous Research
and Community-Led Engagement**

2024 Indigenous Student & Faculty Visioning Consultations: **Final Report**

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Prepared by Sanala Planning Inc. | June 2024

Executive Summary

In 2024 the University of Victoria's Centre for Indigenous Research and Community-Led Engagement (CIRCLE) undertook a visioning process with Indigenous graduate students, faculty and staff. The goal of this process was to centre Indigenous voices and stories in describing a vision for CIRCLE, in keeping with the Centre's mandate and priorities.

The visioning process included several gatherings, involving 23 participants overall. On March 11th CIRCLE hosted two in-person gatherings. Graduate students met in the morning, and faculty & staff members in the afternoon, to share their vision for the future of CIRCLE. Two virtual sessions were held via Zoom on March 14th and 25th, with mixed groups of students, faculty, and staff in each. Finally, a virtual questionnaire was circulated via email to Indigenous graduate students and faculty, with nineteen responses (including some folks who attended an in-person or virtual gathering).

Analysis of the notes and questionnaire responses resulted in the following eight elements of the shared vision for CIRCLE:

- Indigenous-led - CIRCLE upholds Indigenous self-determination in all its activities
- Connecting - CIRCLE provides frequent opportunities for Indigenous students and faculty to gather
- Partnering - CIRCLE provides tangible benefits and is deeply connected to Indigenous communities, with a focus on local First Nations
- Belonging - CIRCLE is a safe, accessible and adaptable space that is Indigenized throughout
- Growing - CIRCLE continues to grow in resourcing, impact and offerings
- Contributing - CIRCLE supports expansive thinking in the field of Indigenous research and community-led engagement
- Mentoring - CIRCLE supports students and faculty at every stage of their journey
- Affirming - Indigenous scholars at UVic are honoured, supported and uplifted by CIRCLE

In addition to the vision, participants also shared suggestions for specific workshops and guest speakers, addressed the question of whether or not CIRCLE should provide Indigenous-only spaces and gatherings, and shared their overall concerns. This feedback will be invaluable in guiding CIRCLE forward and we are grateful to all of the participants for sharing your time and ideas with us.

About CIRCLE

The Centre for Indigenous Research and Community-Led Engagement (CIRCLE) is a research centre at the University of Victoria (UVic) in Lekwungen territory (Victoria, British Columbia, Canada). CIRCLE is dedicated to promoting and engaging in research with Indigenous Peoples to improve their well-being.

Through meaningful engagement with communities and organisations in British Columbia, across Canada, and internationally, CIRCLE seeks to promote, facilitate and lead relevant and ethical research that improves Indigenous peoples' well-being by bringing together diverse academic and community members to support inclusive mentorship, community-led research training and knowledge sharing driven by, and for the benefit of Indigenous Nations and Peoples.

CIRCLE provides resources and support for faculty, students and communities to undertake Indigenous research and related activities and our programs are respectful of local Indigenous knowledge systems and worldviews. We promote culturally safe and appropriate research relationships as well as meaningful collaborations at local, regional, national and international levels.

Project Rationale & Overview

In 2023 the University of Victoria (UVic) completed a new strategic plan and Indigenous Plan which both highlight the importance of Indigenous scholarship at the university. Given this increased focus, an upcoming external review process, and the desire to ground the work of the Centre in Indigenous voices, CIRCLE launched a series of visioning consultations in early 2024. The purpose of these consultations was to solicit feedback from Indigenous graduate students, faculty and staff members at UVic regarding the future vision for CIRCLE.

CIRCLE engaged Jessie Hemphill from Sanala Planning Inc. for help with engagement design, facilitation, data analysis and report writing. Sanala is an Indigenous-owned planning firm using planning as a tool for self-determination and well-being. Four visioning consultation sessions took place - two in-person at CIRCLE on March 11th, 2024 and two virtual on March 14th and 25th. Michelle Buchholz, an Indigenous graphic recorder and owner of Cassyex Consulting, did graphic recordings for the in-person sessions. To include people who could not attend the sessions, an online questionnaire was developed that received nineteen responses between March 12th and 29th.

Engagements

Indigenous graduate students and faculty were invited by CIRCLE to participate in the visioning consultations, with invitations circulated via the CIRCLE listserv, social media, and direct email to UVic Indigenous faculty via the Office of the Vice President Indigenous.

In order to make the visioning consultations accessible for students and faculty, they were designed with a brief, flexible agenda. Food was provided during the in-person sessions (and prizes at the end of the students' session) as a gesture of reciprocity and to create a welcoming, community-building environment. Time was made for roundtable introductions and a check-in, to help foster interconnection between participants and make space for well-being.

The goal for all four sessions was to create an Indigenous-led vision for cross-departmental Indigenous research and community-led engagement (scholarship) at UVic. To achieve this goal, participants were asked the following questions, with an emphasis on the first question:

- What is your vision for Indigenous scholarship (community-led engagement and research) at UVIC?
- What kind of community building would support you in your work?
- How can CIRCLE become a go-to place for community building on campus?
- Are there any speakers/presenters you would like CIRCLE to bring to UVic?
- How can CIRCLE affirm and celebrate the incredible work of Indigenous scholars at UVic?
- Would you like the opportunity for more Indigenous-only spaces to discuss research and community-led engagement at UVic?
- If yes, why would this be meaningful to you?
- What should these spaces/gatherings look like?
- What do you think CIRCLE needs to avoid, moving forward?
- How would you personally like to be supported by CIRCLE in your research and/or community engagement?
- What kind of practical research and community engagement programming/activities would you like to see CIRCLE organizing for Indigenous students and faculty?

“It’s been meaningful to be involved and support this process which has been lovely. I really appreciated the warm facilitation style, breathwork, and visioning exercise! Miigwetch/thank you!”

Each session followed the same agenda:

Time	Activity
15 minutes	Welcome & Opening Remarks
1 hour	Roundtable Introductions & Visioning Exercise
30 minutes	Guided Discussion
15 minutes	Next Steps & Closing Comments

In-Person Sessions

Two in-person sessions were held at CIRCLE on March 11th, 2024. The first session ran from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and included six Indigenous graduate students as well as CIRCLE staff. The second session ran from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. and included six Indigenous faculty members as well as CIRCLE staff. Michelle Buchholz (Cassyex Consulting) provided graphic recordings for both in-person sessions, found on pages 7-10.

Virtual Sessions

The first virtual session took place via Zoom on March 14th. Three graduate students, one staff member connected to Indigenous research, and one faculty member took part. The second session, on March 25th, included two graduate students and four faculty members.

Online Questionnaire

The anonymous questionnaire used the same discussion questions as the engagements. Nineteen responses were received between March 12th and 29th - eleven students, seven faculty members/teachers, and one where the respondent didn't self-identify in either of these categories. Of these, four attended the in-person session and two had attended/ planned to attend a virtual session

Data Analysis

After the consultations were complete, all of the notes and questionnaire responses were collated and coded to develop the following eight sections - the vision for CIRCLE. The next part of this report describes these eight sections in greater detail and provides participant quotes for each one.

CIRCLE INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENTS

Indigenous Graduate Students

Meet the Needs & Priorities of Indigenous Researchers

Graduate Students's VISION

We are from Diverse Nations & have Diverse Experiences

Finding our Ancestors
Gender Expression
Finding our Passion



COMMUNITY BUILDING

INDIGENOUS Research has GROWN at UVic: Transformation

Stewarding & Connecting across disciplines

GATHERING IDEAS: what would/could CIRCLE LOOK LIKE?

We need to have the UNDERSTANDING that PAN-INDIGENOUS approaches won't work

The use of SPACE is always a bit of a CHALLENGE

PEOPLE FIRST, Credentials Second...

Medicine Garden...



Flexibility is Key in PROGRAMS, SPACE, SUPPORTS, ETC...



ENSURING we can BUILD a COMFORTABLE SPACE & CAN address Colonialism & Silos TOGETHER

INDIGENOUS Being Me & NOT HAVING to EXPLAIN ONLY SPACES NEEDED





The Vision for CIRCLE



Indigenous-led - CIRCLE upholds Indigenous self-determination in all its activities



Growing - CIRCLE continues to grow in resourcing, impact and offerings



Connecting - CIRCLE provides frequent opportunities for Indigenous students and faculty to gather



Contributing - CIRCLE is a leader in the field of Indigenous research and community-led engagement



Partnering - CIRCLE provides tangible benefits and is deeply connected to Indigenous Communities, with a focus on local First Nations



Mentoring - CIRCLE supports students and faculty at every stage of their journey



Belonging - CIRCLE is a safe, accessible and adaptable space that is Indigenous throughout



Affirming - Indigenous scholars at Uvic are honoured, supported and uplifted by CIRCLE



1. Indigenous-Led **CIRCLE upholds Indigenous** **self-determination in all its** **activities**

“There are sounds of local people singing, speaking their language.”

CIRCLE recognizes Indigenous self-determination as fundamental to everything that we do. This guides all of our decision-making as we strive to advance Indigenous-led community-engaged research initiated with, for and by Indigenous Peoples through mutually respectful, relational and transformative collaborations. CIRCLE works closely with Indigenous knowledge holders and uplifts Indigenous voices in our own governance as well as in the work that we support. We provide space for Indigenous people and communities to speak their truth and share their stories, and help to promote Indigenous approaches to research and community-led engagement at UVic and beyond.

“I’m drawn in by the research that CIRCLE supports, such as language learning, bringing family in to learn, sharing community connections in person.”

“What about an Indigenous community-based “living lab”... where folks could go out with a research team & experience what the work is like... in a safe way... integrating interdisciplinary relationships in research. Land-based excursions. Writing retreats... but wellness retreats on the land/water.”

“At CIRCLE, people just “get” positionality, intergenerational trauma, etc. when we’re talking about our research.”



2. Connecting

CIRCLE provides frequent opportunities for Indigenous students and faculty to gather

“It would be so refreshing to come to a place, on campus, where a humble attitude is valued above the accumulation of colonial knowledge and degrees.”

CIRCLE is known by all as an on-campus community hub for Indigenous people involved in research and community-led engagement. At CIRCLE, Indigenous people feel a sense of community and safety, not isolation, siloeing or tokenization. Frequent gatherings, both formal and informal, provide opportunities for relationship building, collaboration and co-learning. These gatherings are inclusive, accessible and guided by protocol to support the well-being of participants. Many of these gatherings include people from local Indigenous communities, of all ages.

Formal gatherings at CIRCLE include classes, writing retreats, co-working sessions, workshops, guest speakers, knowledge exchanges, lunch and learns/teach-ins, and conferences. These formal gatherings help to unite Indigenous scholars and faculty from across campus, supporting relationship and trans-disciplinary cohort building, skill building, and knowledge sharing in culturally safe ways. Informal gatherings create feelings of safety, home, and kinship. These gatherings include dinners where family and community members are invited, social events (including those for affinity groups like 2SLGBTQQIA+, Coastal Plains, Northern, parents/guardians + kids, people with disabilities, etc.), movie nights, unstructured drop-in time, and networking events to help create a sense of being in the collective.

“I value and, actually, need a safe community that is not going to freak the eff out if I happen to talk about something that they find triggering—a community that knows how to safely and seamlessly bracket their emotions, and communicate kindly and compassionately (to themselves and others) when triggered, rather than lashing out. (This takes WORK and PRACTICE, and I’m not talking about the academic kind).”

“Meeting with our cohorts and being in discussion about our projects and planning for them is so beneficial and inspiring. To be able to continue sharing our projects or celebrating each other or inspiring each other to embark on another project is the “rising tide that can [lift] all boats”.”



3. Partnering

CIRCLE provides tangible benefits and is deeply connected to Indigenous Communities, with a focus on local First Nations

“How cool would it be to be transported, like a portage, from UVic to community?”

CIRCLE works closely with Indigenous people and communities in ways that deeply honour local First Nations while also being inclusive to diverse Indigenous people and cultures from farther away. We facilitate long-term, meaningful relationships with Indigenous communities to ensure continuity and reciprocity in the face of shifting priorities and emergent needs. CIRCLE helps to foster mutual accountability between UVic and community partners based on high ethical standards, ensuring that Indigenous Peoples benefit in tangible ways from research and community-led engagement at UVic. Strong UVic-community connections help to bring more local First Nations faculty to UVic, and help to embed principles like “land back” into the way that UVic works with Indigenous Peoples, leading to trusting, fruitful, long-term collaborations and relationships.

CIRCLE has mechanisms to receive, facilitate and track community requests for scholarly support (including funding for community-based projects), and helps to connect scholars with communities to meet their needs, support their self-determination, and revitalize culturally specific ways of being, knowing and doing. CIRCLE has adequate staff to support this coordination in a way that is low-barrier to Indigenous students and faculty and easy to access for Indigenous community partners. CIRCLE helps to ensure that Indigenous people are the leaders and teachers, and that non-Indigenous researchers show cultural humility when working with community.

“Wouldn’t it be cool if there was a bus that took students to the CIRCLE location in community, where lots of community-engaged research was happening? Maybe as a satellite building... where folks from community are doing their everyday work...”

“My vision includes a reciprocal process -- where the community can be engaged with UVic and UVic can be engaged with the community. I also hope that Indigenous communities have the opportunity to request research support for their specific needs and then UVic coordinate with our colleagues to find the required support.”



4. Belonging

CIRCLE is a safe, accessible and adaptable space that is Indigenized throughout.

“CIRCLE needs to be inside the circle!”

CIRCLE is well-known on campus and in local Indigenous communities as a beautiful place where Indigenous people (faculty, staff, students and community members) and others feel welcome, included, and supported. The space is accessible to all (and is inside Ring Road) and it is very easy to find information about when and how to access CIRCLE’s space and offerings with an up-to-date website & calendar of events and a strong visible presence on campus. There is always room for people to drop in and use the facilities, with room and flexibility to accommodate the changing needs of users. Great care is taken to ensure that 2SLGBTQQIA+ students feel safe in the space, and CIRCLE helps people connect to well-ness supports.

CIRCLE’s space feels unconventional and clearly Indigenous, with a permanent structure that honours local First Nations and an adjacent outdoor structure like a wall tent or tipi with an open fire available for communal and ceremonial use. Reverence for nature is obvious, with big windows and natural elements in the space and native plants like camas surround the building. There is always coffee, food and Indigenous medicines available, and people often come by to take part in ceremonial activities in the non-judgemental setting. Elders, children and community members are welcome and often in the space, with materials for making projects together and working communally as well as individually. People can work on beadwork, art, and other projects. There is room to stretch out, get comfortable, and gather in groups. The space supports land-based research and learning. Scholars using Indigenous research methodologies see CIRCLE as supporting these methodologies through the very ways the space is designed and used.

“A place where self-healing, introspection and awareness happens. People can touch each other in a safe, boundaried way - I can get a long hug.”

“I want to feel safe, both as a gender diverse person and as a Métis person.”

“Walking into the space - smelling smudge, coffee, food - seeing this big circle in the middle where people can just come and write, can walk in anytime.”

“It would also be cool to be able to go out together on the land, or be in spaces where we can learn from each other.”



5. Growing CIRCLE continues to grow in resourcing, impact and offerings

“Moving away from scarcity mindset.”

Building on a legacy of good work and positive impacts, CIRCLE is appreciated and well-resourced by UVic and is able to expand our offerings to match our vision. We celebrate our accomplishments and those who have contributed to them and there is a feeling of excitement about the future of CIRCLE. Funding is sustained and guaranteed, we have a strong financial strategy, and we have a self-determining governance structure guided by Indigenous voices. We learn from others across the world doing similar work, and collaborate with each other to spread our impact and learn from global partners. There is enough capacity to move our work forward so that individuals do not feel overwhelmed or under-resourced but rather well-supported and networked.

Our growth occurs at a pace that works for us and our community partners, and we are able to compensate them well for their work with CIRCLE. We function like a hub, connected to many others supporting Indigenous scholarship and not trying to “do it all”. We are able to help coordinate access to and distribution of funds to support equity and justice, sometimes in ways that are unconventional for UVic. We help scholars find funding and support them through the application process through to the post-grant stage. Indigenous ways of knowing and being inform our structure and systems at every level.

“Hearing about opportunities for students that are continuing to grow, and feeling excitement/relief about the idea of having post-grant support - “welcome back from your trip, send me your receipts, let me know how we can support you in processing those claims from your grant”.”

“CIRCLE helps to coordinate and distribute funds equitably.”



6. Contributing

CIRCLE is a leader in the field of Indigenous research and community-led engagement

“I’m able to show up as my whole self, without feeling like UVIC is just trying to extract value from me as an Indigenous faculty member.”

CIRCLE continues to be a leader in Indigenous scholarship at UVic and beyond. We build on our track record of advancing new models for Indigenous research in Canada and continue to innovate expansive concepts of Indigenous research. We cultivate a knowledge base that is inspiring, radical, and change-making, supporting scholars working outside of academic norms in order to be in alignment with Indigenous ways of knowing and being and their personal values. CIRCLE’s support and advocacy helps to make it safer for scholars at UVic to take on politicised and/or challenging research topics. We support the Land Back movement and are unapologetically decolonial.

We provide a platform for Indigenous community-based scholars from across UVic and around the world to share their work and connect with one another to advance Indigenous self-determination. CIRCLE coordinates events such as conferences and land-based excursions. CIRCLE produces publications such as journals and podcasts that highlight the work of Indigenous scholars (including those outside of academia) in all disciplines and lead to collaboration and innovation. The work we support is made accessible and consistently demonstrates tangible benefits to Indigenous Peoples and individuals. We connect Indigenous scholars across generational and other divides, and see each other as kin rather than resources with knowledge to be extracted for the benefit of the university.

“Having our own knowledge mobilisation events... Creating an Indigenous research lab. Mentorship on publishing, presenting, and grant writing. Internal micro grants at UVic to help graduate students and faculty with additional research costs like Elder honoraria, community gifts and events, and hiring community contractors...”

“I know that takes more time, intention, funding, capacity, etc. but that is my vision for CIRCLE to set the example for what Indigenous-led, community-based research looks like within the academy. More flexibility for CIRCLE in their timelines and funding or whatever they need so they can have the space to do the work in our ways on our own time - that is a respect for our cultural ways of doing and knowing. That is reconcili-action... it’s time the university makes space for this.”



7. Mentoring

CIRCLE supports students and faculty at every stage of their journey

“[I envision feeling] the happiness of working with folks as they transition in their own career.”

CIRCLE demystifies academic processes at UVic to reduce barriers for Indigenous students and faculty. We support Indigenous scholars to feel excited, informed, competent and connected through every stage of their time at UVic. Intergenerational relationships, mentorship opportunities, peer-to-peer partnerships and training are provided to help students and faculty navigate academic and administrative systems. CIRCLE shares information that helps Indigenous scholars understand their options (such as graduate school, research grants, tenure track etc.) and determine a path towards their research and career goals. We treat each other with respect and compassion, and strive to share resources and opportunities equitably and transparently. We celebrate each others' successes and uplift each others' work. CIRCLE helps to recruit more Indigenous students and faculty for the University and helps these students and faculty push back against systemic oppression, microaggressions, and other harmful behaviours.

“Excitement of bringing new Indigenous researchers into the space and making the transition from student projects to faculty projects.”

“Great if there were supports for finances and administrative stuff - UVic assumes you know how to do it (managing RAs, orienting students to RA-ships, tracking RA hours, outputs, tasks etc., as well as teaching supports for various stages of being on faculty.)”

“A behind-the-scenes of the various things that go on in academia - e.g. preparing your first publication for submission, the different stages, what peer review looks like and the ways you can push back against conventional practices (demystifying these opaque processes).”

“I would really like the opportunity to meet other folks engaged with the work I'm engaged in. Maybe themed gatherings or networking sessions can bring people from different departments together to discuss and connect similar research projects?”



8. Affirming

Indigenous scholars at UVic are honoured, supported and uplifted by CIRCLE

“People first, credentials second.”

As a result of CIRCLE’s efforts to uplift Indigenous scholars, they feel proud, confident, and excited to be a part of the scholarly community. Students, faculty, staff and community partners at UVic are well aware of Indigenous scholars and scholarship, and there is significant campus-wide awareness of and support for their work. Because of this support and recognition, resources and respect flow to Indigenous scholars who can take the time and space they need to do their research in a way that feels grounded, relational, and healing.

CIRCLE creates frequent opportunities for honouring and uplifting Indigenous scholars at UVic, including honouring ceremonies such as blanketing new graduates. CIRCLE is able to help these scholars find the support they need to advance their research (e.g. finding community partners, securing funding) including post-grant support. CIRCLE creates publications (e.g. posters, newsletters, journals) and other media (e.g. podcasts, social media posts) that celebrate the work of Indigenous scholars at UVic. CIRCLE coordinates events like workshops and conferences where Indigenous scholars can present, and provides awards to outstanding students and faculty. CIRCLE shares information about events such as thesis defences and in-community events to help build networks of support around Indigenous scholars and community partners.

“When we recognize people, I’ve seen someone publicly announce the work that person has done and how that person has grown. It can get emotional! Then they wrap the person in a star blanket, and they go around the circle and hug the witnesses who offer them good wishes and energy. Something like that which honours our people in our ways.”

“People not stressed about time, the burden, the feeling of being demanded - able to relax, slow down, really sink into the work.”

“Make space for events whereby Indigenous scholars can show the greater community who they are, what they are up to, and their vision for the future of Indigenous folks—events that include everyone so that the historical colonial exclusion of others is not perpetuated in the healing, and restoration, of Indigenous people.”

Additional Feedback

Workshop Suggestions

- Writing retreats and workshops (*The most common suggestion by far*)
- Research 101 workshops
- Data storage/management and analysis training
- NVivo, Zotero and other software training
- Indigenous Artificial Intelligence technologies
- Grant writing and financial management training
- More panels on different approaches and dialogue with other Indigenous scholars
- Regularly scheduled Talking Circles that are confidential, non-judgemental, and forward-thinking, led by trained facilitators
- Conflict engagement/resolution training

Speakers and Presenters for CIRCLE to Bring to UVic

There is a strong preference for CIRCLE to prioritise inviting Indigenous faculty, teachers and students who are already at UVic to be speakers at CIRCLE events (e.g. Rob Hancock and Kelly Aguire) as well as local Indigenous scholars, Knowledge Holders and Elders.

There is some interest in inviting Indigenous scholars from farther afield (especially 2SLGBTQQIA+ speakers), and some individuals were suggested as ideal invitees for future speaking engagements at UVic, including:

- Shawn Wilson
- Margaret Kovach
- Mishuana Goeman
- Audra Simpson
- Michelle Murphy
- Max Liboiron
- Dwayne Donald
- Maria Campbell
- Chief Robert Joseph
- Leanne Simpson
- 2SLGBTQQIA+ Speakers
- Jo-ann Archibald
- Marie Clements
- Tantoo Cardinal
- Cliff Cardinal
- Gil Birmingham
- Taylor Sheridan
- Graham Greene
- Dr. Alex Wilson
- Daniel Heath Justice
- Chelsea Vowel
- Allica Elliot

Should Circle Provide Spaces and Organize Gatherings That Are Only Meant for Indigenous People?

The response to this question was overwhelmingly “yes” - not out of a desire to exclude, but out of a strong desire to connect with other Indigenous people and to feel safe and free from the microaggressions and other harms experienced on campus. Often, when Indigenous scholars are working with non-Indigenous peers on Indigenous community-based research, the Indigenous scholars take on extra labour to educate these peers and ensure community safety and protocols guide the work. In Indigenous-only spaces, there’s a feeling of being able to relax and let one’s guard down. There’s a greater level of trust, of being understood. There is less trauma, less racism, less tokenization. This allows Indigenous scholars to go deeper in their conversations and refine their ideas in a space that feels more inspiring and supportive.

Indigenous-only gatherings should be multidisciplinary, intergenerational, and accessible. There should be a focus on well-being, with food and art and ceremony included. Ideally they would be land-based and community-based with Elders and Knowledge Holders present. There should be protocols to help ensure mutual respect and positive relationship building. Out of nineteen questionnaire responses, only two expressed concerns about the idea of Indigenous-only spaces and their quotes are the last two provided below.

“Yes, Indigenous-led research is challenging and wonderful in some common ways. When we are in spaces with non-Indigenous faculty or our students we have to adapt our comments and demeanour in specific ways. Sharing spaces, physical and verbal, with other Indigenous faculty (and at times Indigenous students) would be valuable for sharing successes and (at times, common) struggles for solutions and community.”

“Yes, sometimes CIRCLE events can feel like it’s a space for non-Indigenous scholars to seek affirmation, rather than a space for Indigenous scholars to present and refine their research.”

“Yes, Indigenous only spaces are appropriate sometimes, especially in spaces for healing and internal community discussions about our needs, where a white-gaze or input can be harmful, uncomfortable and take up space.”

“I am uncertain on this, as I see value in including non Indigenous as well in order to build understanding etc.”

“I think there’s a good amount of Indigenous-only spaces. I don’t like the idea of restricting things because sometimes I think allies can learn a lot from listening to these struggles. That said, I get exhausted having to explain things to settlers, especially when I just need to complain about something and my settler classmates don’t understand it and I’m just left feeling annoyed and tired of dealing with settler ignorance.”

Concerns

CIRCLE needs to be careful not to move too quickly or in a way that is out of alignment with our values and purpose - e.g. contributing to division and siloes, excluding voices, or creating spaces where elitism or favouritism control decision making. We need to make sure that we continue to centre decolonial practices and embed Indigenous ways of knowing and being into our structure and systems. This includes centring Indigenous voices in our planning and governance work and prioritising support for Indigenous scholars. We need to ensure that our supports are consistent and predictable, so as to maintain trusting relationships with community partners.

CIRCLE also needs to maintain our focus on Indigenous student support. Increased faculty support shouldn't come at the expense of student support. At the same time, we need to also maintain (and communicate) our focus on research, not student services.

Finally, we need to be careful not to contribute to pan-indigenization or stereotyping at UVic. CIRCLE is committed to recognizing diversity and intersectional identities within our communities. CIRCLE is based in Lekwungen territory, and this acknowledgement must be central, while still making ample space for diverse Indigenous Peoples and voices in our work. These issues are being taken up by Universities across Canada and internationally, as we seek to uphold the self-determination of our host nations while advancing culturally- and community-specific knowledge. We seek to be leaders in balancing these questions through ethical, long-term relationships both with local nations and Indigenous Peoples globally, across diverse fields and areas of scholarship.

“We are on this territory and owe service and obligations to these Nations. We can have a broader focus, but we need to practice our own ethical land based knowledge.”

“It would be tragic if CIRCLE were to lose its focus on Indigenous student training and support — this has been a key aspect of its work over the past few years, and any supports for faculty should be in addition to the student focus rather than at its expense.”