Winter 2024 Newsletter
The Office of the Vice-President Indigenous and
The Office of Indigenous Academic & Community Engagement

 Territory Acknowledgement

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

Xʷkwənən ʔistel | W̱ČENENỊSTEL | Helping to move each other forward, UVic’s Indigenous Plan 2023

In September, UVic celebrated the launch of Xʷkwənən ʔistel | W̱ČENENỊSTEL | Helping to move each other forward: UVic’s Indigenous Plan. With local Indigenous teachings and Lək̓ʷəŋən and SENĆOŦEN language woven throughout, this new plan proposes a fundamental rethinking of the institution’s approach to learning and working.

Working in consultation with Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers, students, staff, faculty and community members, this plan was shaped in tandem with Distinctly UVic, the institution’s new strategic plan. Both envision a future where Indigenous ways of knowing, being and learning are embedded into UVic’s programs, systems and organizational structures. These plans outline a strategy for UVic to demonstrate its commitments and responsibilities under the BC Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (BC DRIPA), which calls on all levels of governments to support the the rights and sovereignties of Indigenous Peoples.

Grounded in local Indigenous languages and teachings, these plans provide a new, shared foundation for the work ahead. The SENĆOŦEN name of the Indigenous Plan was shared by J,SIṈTEN, Dr. John Elliott (Tsartlip First Nation) and translated into Lək̓ʷəŋən by Seniemten, Dr. Elmer George (Songhees Nation). Recordings of the language can also be found on the OVPI website at www.uvic.ca/ovpi/language.

With gratitude to all who contributed to the renewal of UVic’s Indigenous Plan, a celebratory launch event brought together Indigenous students, staff, faculty and community in the First Peoples House, where J,SIṈTEN, Dr. John Elliott was honoured for his contributions. To download your copy, visit: www.uvic.ca/ovpi
Thasekiyahe, Margaret Charlie

Director of Culture, Protocol, and Community Relations

My name is Thasekiyahe my English name is Margaret Charlie. I am a member of Songhees Nation along with my father, my mom is a member of Tsartlip First Nation. My role within OVPI is the Director of Culture, Protocol and Community Relations. I am fortunate to be trusted and guided by Elders within my family and community. Cultural protocols and teachings are something I hold near and dear to my heart, most of my work has been assisting families with various cultural ceremonies in many aspects.

Currently I have the honour of sitting at the leadership table at Songhees Nation as an elected councillor. This experience has been one of the most fulfilling roles of my life. We work collectively as a team holding our members in the forefront of all the work we do.

I am a daughter, mom, grandma and auntie to the most amazing humans. My goal in life is to ensure I am representing my family and my traditional name in a good way, as they are held in the highest regard.

Abbey Hall

Executive Assistant

My name is Abbey Hall, hello! I was born on Treaty 8 territory on the lands of the Tse’Khene Nation, and I carry mixed European ancestry (Scottish, Irish, and Swedish). I have been gratefully navigating life on Lək̓ ʷəŋən and WSÁNEĆ territories for the last twelve years while completing my undergraduate and master’s degrees in art history & visual studies here at UVic. Since graduating in 2018, I’ve been a part of the university community working in the library and the department of English, and I am excited to share that I’ve recently joined the Office of the Vice-President Indigenous. As the Executive Assistant for Qwul’šiyh’maht, Dr. Robina Thomas, my role involves ensuring efficient operations within the OVPI.
Respecting the rights of one another and being in right relationship with all things

UVic’s new strategic plan launched this September, which includes the pledge of ?etal nawel | ÁTOL,NEUEL, which translates to respecting the rights of one another and being in right relationship with all things. This pledge took the spotlight in UVic’s latest campaign, aiming to raise awareness about the university’s role as a national leader in Indigenous reconciliation. To learn more about this campaign, visit: www.uvic.ca/worktogether

Indigenous Languages

Language is the foundation of Indigenous laws, worldviews and ways of knowing and being. The protection and revitalization of Indigenous languages is a priority for local Indigenous communities and for UVic.

Throughout the Indigenous plan, we have used Lə̓k̓ʷəŋən and SENĆOŦEN language and teachings. These words and teachings have been shared with the university community by Elders, Language and Knowledge Keepers from the local Nations, and we are charged with upholding them through the Coast Salish teaching of NaWes ƛxʷ can ʔay ƛqələqʷən | AMEKT TTEN IY, ŚKÁLEĆEN | Bring in a good heart and a good mind.

Elders Seniemten, Dr. Elmer George (Songhees Nation, Lə̓k̓ʷəŋən), and J,SIṈTEN, Dr. John Elliott (Tsartlip First Nation, SENĆOŦEN), have provided permission and guidance on the use of Lə̓k̓ʷəŋən and SENĆOŦEN throughout the Indigenous Plan.

To immerse yourself in local language, visit: www.uvic.ca/ovpi/language

Collaboration Agreements

One of the goals of the OVPI and UVic overall is to formally strengthen our partnerships with local Nations through Collaboration Agreements.

In 2022, leadership from the University of Victoria (UVic) and the WSÁNEĆ School Board (WSB) gathered on WSÁNEĆ territory for a signing ceremony for the renewal of the Collaboration Agreement 2022-2030. The original agreement, first signed in 2014, set out a five year plan to work together in a good way that holds up the values of WSÁNEĆ culture, language and knowledge. By working together, both partners commit to develop and prioritize educational programming and services that promote the growth and development of First Nations students, and that strengthen the foundation for capacity building amongst WSÁNEĆ communities. The renewed agreement is a living document providing flexibility and the option to update as needed with the agreement of both parties.

If you are interested in learning more about a Collaboration Agreement with UVic, please contact the OVPI office at vpiadmin@uvic.ca.

Congratulations, Dr. Onowa Mclvor!

Congratulations, Dr. Onowa Mclvor, on being named a 2023 recipient of the prestigious Royal Society of Canada (RSC) fellowship! Your remarkable contributions in the field of Indigenous language revitalization have not only earned you this esteemed honour but have also significantly advanced initiatives and programs that revive Indigenous languages across Canada.

As a leader directing the NETOLNEW Research Partnership, your commitment to community-based research has been truly transformative.

We celebrate your academic excellence, your commitment to Indigenous language revitalization and your profound impact on communities.
This fall, the LE, NONET Campus Cousins program welcomed 14 new Cousins to the growing community. The Cousins are remarkable Indigenous upper-level undergraduate and graduate students who are dedicated to building a strong and inclusive community at the First Peoples House.

The Campus Cousins are here to support students on their academic journey by hosting a wide range of events. From study halls to learning communities to insightful workshops, they’ve got your back. But, it’s not all about hitting the books. They’re also the creative minds behind our vibrant social and cultural events, including feasts, movie nights, and game nights.

To ensure that students have every opportunity to benefit from their support, the First Peoples House will be extending its hours. You can now access this welcoming space until 8:00pm from Monday to Thursday. It’s an incredible opportunity for late-night study sessions and community bonding.

Follow @campus_cousins on Instagram to stay up to date with these events.

Ribbon Skirt Workshop

In October, the talented Crystal Brune joined up with students to guide immersive ribbon skirt and garment workshops. Crystal not only shared valuable skills but also shared enriched teachings. Participants had the unique opportunity to craft their own stunning ribbon skirts or ribbon jackets, adding their own touches of personal creativity to each creation. Blending culture and creativity, Crystal’s expertise and passion left a lasting impact on all who participated in these engaging sessions.

Medicine Pouch Workshop

During the month of November, the Aunty Collective provided guidance and support as students embarked on a journey to craft their own unique medicine pouches. These pouches are for sacred medicines such as cedar, sage, tobacco, and sweetgrass, symbolizing a deep connection to our traditions. Carrying these sacred items in our pouches serves as a constant reminder of the significance of staying rooted in our heritage and the protective qualities they hold. As we continue to explore diverse approaches to well-being, traditional medicines remain a rich source of wisdom and healing, providing a holistic framework for a healthier and more balanced life.
Indigenous Recognition Ceremony Fall 2023

The Indigenous Recognition Ceremony (IRC) is a deeply meaningful event that takes place at UVic’s First Peoples House. It is not only a celebration of academic accomplishments but also a testament to the resilience, determination, and cultural heritage of our Indigenous students.

Held in accordance with Coast Salish protocol and guided by the laws of these lands, the ceremony is a powerful representation of our commitment to recognizing and upholding the values and traditions of the Indigenous peoples.

The Indigenous Recognition Ceremony was celebrated over two evenings to accommodate the number of students graduating. Family, friends, Elders and community gathered together to celebrate them on their achievements.

Indigenous Student Week of Welcome

From January 8-12, join us in the First Peoples House where IACE will be hosting a series of events throughout the week to engage with new and returning Indigenous students.

In addition to a Student Support orientation, stop by for meet and greets with Campus Cousins, the IACE team, Native Students Union and the Elders in Residence. We will provide lots of food, fun and games throughout the week.

Upcoming Events

- Indigenous Student Week of Welcome
  - January 8-12 in the FPH, Ceremonial Hall
- Virtual Crafternoon
  - Thursday, January 18
- Noon Networking every Wednesday
  - 11:30-1:00pm in the FPH, Ceremonial Hall

Welcome to the IACE team!

Candice Cook  
LE, NONET First Year Coordinator

Hello! My name is Candice Cook (she/her), and I’m a member of Driftpile Cree Nation through my dad’s side and Métis with connections to the Cunningham family on my mom’s side. I also carry mixed European ancestry (German, Scottish, English, and French). I was born and raised on the southern shores of the Lesser Slave Lake in Treaty 8 Territory and am grateful to have been a visitor to the lək̓ʷəŋən and WSÁNEĆ territory since 2021.

I am honoured to join you as the LE, NONET First Year Coordinator. In this role, I’m developing and delivering programming and services for first-year undergraduate Indigenous students to help build connections, feel prepared for academic studies, navigate university life, and support cultural connections. Beginning in January, I will also be available at the First Peoples House for drop-in or one-on-one appointments to offer support, resources or to answer any questions that may come up for Indigenous students in their first year.

Candice can be contacted via email lenonetfyc@uvic.ca, or stop by the IACE office in the FPH.
Medicine Pouch Workshop with Aunty Collective

Drop-in Crafternoon

Student Yoga hosted by Tanisha Nuttall

Lii Michif Niiyanaan: We Are Métis film launch

Campus Cousins Mini Wreath Workshop

Lii Michif Niiyanaan: We Are Métis film launch

Indigenous Recognition Ceremony Fall 2023

Medicine Pouch Workshop with Aunty Collective

Indigenous Recognition Ceremony Fall 2023
J,SIṈTEN, Dr. John Elliott at Indigenous Plan launch

Robina presenting J,SIṈTEN with a hand-made vest

 Programs for the Indigenous Plan launch

Lalita handing Qwul’thilum, Dylan Thomas a framed print of his artwork

Blanketing Qwul’thilum, Dylan Thomas

Blanketing Qwul’thilum, Dylan Thomas

Qwul’sih’yah’maht, Robina Thomas, VP Indigenous