

FIRST CHOICES FIRST NATIONS

FALL/WINTER 2018

Building the next generation of Aboriginal leaders

- › In their communities
- › In post-secondary institutions
- › Through public awareness



Traditional Values and Dynamic Change

The speed and scope of change underway among First Nations have created a shared realization that Aboriginal youth require maximum support to prepare for those changes.

In brief, this awareness involves a broad realization that a shared commitment is needed. That commitment involves empowering Aboriginal youth with the capacities they will need for success in that dynamically changing environment. All of society has a stake in instilling in young Indigenous people the leadership skills they will need for their future careers, community leadership or business success. There is also recognition that those future-focused capabilities must be imparted without compromising traditional values.

This issue of First Choices, First Nations provides a glimpse of what is being done by First Nations, Post-secondary institutions and government to provide those leadership assets. An extensive offering of Indigenous relevant education at BC post-secondary institutions is presented as well as outstanding education and leadership development initiatives underway in a number of First Nations in BC.

Throughout these pages you will see artwork created by First Nations youth, ages 5-18, through their participation in a traditional poster contest sponsored annually by the publisher, FORED BC. The contest is part of a FORED program called AHEAD, standing for Aboriginal Heritage, Education and Dialogue.

Their artistic submissions demonstrate an enthusiastic dedication on the part of Indigenous youth to their heritage.

“future-focused capabilities must be imparted without compromising traditional values.”

90 Years Plus of Helping Community Dialogue

This publication is produced by FORED, a non-profit association that has supported community dialogue in British Columbia since 1925.

That dialogue has always been built around the themes of sustainability and citizen development.

That means helping communities, including Aboriginal communities, achieve growth based on shared values.

As part of this effort, the association has a program called AHEAD, standing for Aboriginal Heritage, Education and Dialogue. AHEAD was created to bring communities together to talk about future opportunities that respect tradition and ways in which Aboriginal youth could be prepared for those opportunities.

This magazine is part of the AHEAD program.

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We acknowledge the financial support of the Province of British Columbia.



Supported by the Province of British Columbia

Advancing Aboriginal Communities Through Advanced Education

As Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Training, the Honourable Melanie Mark has some unique experience in terms connecting advanced education and Aboriginal development goals. She is the first female First Nations member of the BC legislature and Cabinet Minister. Initiatives within the ministry related to Aboriginal education reflect that experience and background.

The ministry has an Aboriginal Action Plan stretching to 2020 that was created through cooperative efforts between staff and a working group of Aboriginal partners. The core goal is to improve post-secondary outcomes for First Nations and Metis peoples.

As part of this approach, post-secondary institutions work with First Nations communities and organizations to develop three-year service plans that *enhance the educational experiences and outcomes for Aboriginal learners.*

The goals of this program are to:

- ♦ Increase access, retention, completion and transition opportunities for Aboriginal learners

- ♦ Strengthen partnerships and collaboration
- ♦ Increase the receptivity and relevance of post-secondary programs for Aboriginal learners

Aboriginal Service Plans are in place at 11 public post-secondary institutions

Another key initiative in the ministry is the Aboriginal Community-Based Training Partnership Program (ACBTP). It addresses the needs of Aboriginal communities facing job challenges in a fast-changing economy.

Through this program the ministry provides funding to post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal communities to deliver education and training to Aboriginal learners.

CONTINUES ON BACK COVER >

“to develop three-year service plans that enhance the educational experiences and outcomes for Aboriginal learners.”

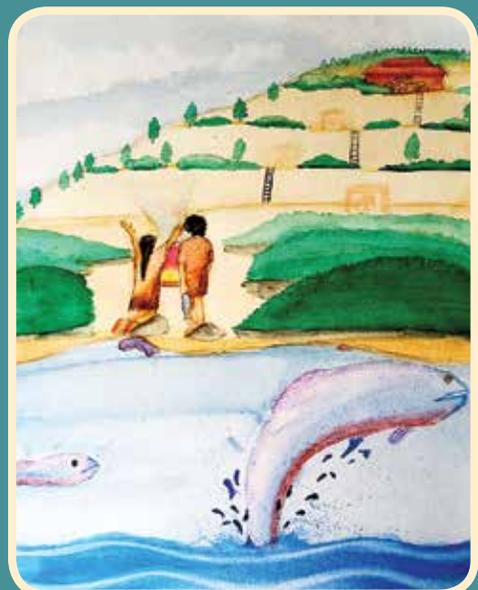
DIVERSITY IS AN INDIGENOUS STRENGTH

The BC government has drafted a set of 10 principles to reset its relationship with Indigenous peoples. The principles are designed to lead to “a modern government-to government relationship that is strong, sophisticated and valued”.

Principle Number 10 states “The Province of British Columbia recognizes that a distinctions-based approach is needed to ensure that the unique rights, interests and circumstances of Indigenous peoples in BC are acknowledged, affirmed and implemented”.

In Canada, it has become a popular refrain to state, “Our diversity is our strength”. In BC, the number of First Nations is equal to the number of countries on earth. Each of those First Nations has a unique culture that has been in place for thousands of years.

Diversity has been strength of Indigenous people for millennia.



Post-secondary institutions in British Columbia have a broad range of creative, relevant programs to advance opportunities for First Nations students and their communities. These programs fully reflect the spirit and intent of reconciliation and many have been in place for several years. This section contains some highlights of programs around BC.

LEADERSHIP IS MORE THAN POPULARITY

In an economy characterized by disruptive technology, the demands on leaders, including Aboriginal leaders, will expand significantly. **North Island College** is offering a learning program to meet this challenge and providing it in a manner that meets contemporary preferences.

The program is entitled Aboriginal Leadership Certificate and is offered on-line. It's a two-year program that will include 2-3 day gatherings on-campus during the semester. The outcome of the program is described as giving students the practical tools and knowledge they will need to work at management and administrator levels of Aboriginal organizations across Canada.

the much-deserved growth opportunity ahead for First Nations will place a higher skill demand on leaders

In the words of program instructor Laura Johnston “Students who have a heart for leadership will gain practical skills and knowledge to lead a way that respects protocol and strengthens community”.

Included in the curriculum are 10 courses including;

- Effective Organizational Communications
- Governance and organizational structure
- Politics, policy and practices
- Economic development

In essence, the course reflects the understanding that the much-deserved growth opportunity

ahead for First Nations will place a higher skill demand on leaders.

The college is committed to supporting achievement for Aboriginal students and ensuring that cultural relevance is addressed.

CREATIVE COMMITMENT TO ABORIGINAL ADVANCEMENT

Although located in the province's largest city, **Simon Fraser University** (SFU) has built strong bonds with First Nations throughout BC. This bonding process has been based on several years of creating study programs and initiatives dedicated to serving Aboriginal needs. This has brought SFU to the current place where it has over 25 distinctive Aboriginal programs and services in place.

The university established Aboriginal Reconciliation Council to engage in an outreach program to determine how SFU could best serve the cause of reconciliation in Canada. The report contained 33 calls for action.

As an effort to increase programs related to Truth and Reconciliation, SFU introduced a graduate Diploma in Education for Reconciliation.



SFU introduced a graduate Diploma in Education for Reconciliation.

These efforts are part of an expansion of Indigenous programming that has been underway for several years. For example, the school's First Nations Language Centre has been in place for five years and has 22 First Nations partners engaged in the task of revitalizing 12 Indigenous languages.

A highly recognized achievement is the Executive MBA program at the Beedie School of Business that has been underway for five years. Two Indigenous women lead the program.

CHOICES IN A WORLD OF CHANGE

The numbers tell a convincing story about the commitment of the **University of British Columbia** (UBC) to expanding opportunity for First Nations through education.

UBC Vancouver campus has 32 Aboriginal faculty members, over 1500 Aboriginal students and 176 courses with Aboriginal content. Major programs with Aboriginal focus can be found in the faculties of science, arts, education, forestry, law, and medicine as well as graduate and post-doctoral studies. The following are brief descriptions of some of these programs.

the skills, capacity and knowledge to achieve their aspirations for sustainable social and economic development.

In Applied Science, there is a program called Scarp Indigenous Community Planning Specialization. The program seeks to empower indigenous communities and community planners with the skills, capacity and knowledge to achieve their aspirations for sustainable social and economic development.

The Indigenous Teacher Education Program is a bachelor program to prepare persons of Aboriginal ancestry to be educators. The program was created in recognition of the fact that while there is a shortage of Aboriginal teachers, there is a high level of interest among Aboriginal youth to become teachers.

The Community and Aboriginal Forestry Program is a specialty designed to meet the growing fields of community and

Aboriginal forestry. Special managerial and technical skills are demanded in these two areas.

The Indigenous Legal Studies Program provides legal education related to Aboriginal issues. Aboriginal students numbering in the hundreds have graduated from the Peter A. Allard School of Law since 1975.

At the **UBC Okanagan Campus**, the Aboriginal Access Studies program is in place to support Aboriginal learners who wish to enter the university. It prepares and transitions them into degree programs.

TRADITION, TECHNOLOGY AND TRADES MEET

As BC's Indigenous Public Post-Secondary Institute, the **Nicola Valley Institute of Technology** has a unique focus on Aboriginal education.

There is a balance in the Institute's Guiding Principles that articulates a focus on cultural sensitivity and career potential. The principles state:

- We are grounded in Indigenous culture, tradition and knowledge
- We will maintain a standard of academic excellence that ensures that our learners have the widest range of future choices possible.
- The array of study program offerings is testimony to this balanced approach.

The city of Cahokia, was the largest city in pre-contact North America. Located north of present-day St. Louis, the city and its satellite communities covered 3000 acres and had a population of 50,000 which was far greater than the populations of London or Paris at the time.

The following is a brief sample of NVIT's post-secondary choices.

Bachelor of Social Work, Aboriginal Community Economic Development, First Nations Public Administration Diploma, Environmental Resources Technology Diploma, Aboriginal Early Childhood Education, Aboriginal Leadership in the Justice System Diploma, Career Training in 8 skilled trades.

a focus on cultural sensitivity and career potential.

THE FOX WOULD APPROVE

Aboriginal people in the BC interior have a legendary story about the coyote as a powerful transformer. It's told in a story entitled "Coyote Brings Food from the Upper World".

new Aboriginal education legislation with the full consent and participation of Aboriginal peoples.

This legend is the inspiration for The Coyote Project at **Thompson Rivers University**, a two-year project to accelerate indigenization across the institution. The project is a response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report. Special emphasis will be placed on elimination of the educational and employment gaps between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginal Canadians and new Aboriginal education legislation with the full consent and participation of Aboriginal peoples.

Increased attention will be given to developing culturally appropriate curricula and teaching Aboriginal languages as credit courses.

Currently, about 10 per cent of TRUs student population is Indigenous.

EASING EDUCATION STRESS

At the **University of Northern British Columbia** (UNBC) a First Nations Centre offers a breadth of services for Aboriginal students as well as academic and cultural support for all UNBC students.

UNBC hosts a large and varied Aboriginal community and the Centre is intended to provide a culturally

sensitive environment as well as educational and personal counseling.

Cultural activities include Potlatch, sharing circles and traditional art workshops. Elders from a number of First Nations volunteer to build connections and support learning and personal growth.

Balancing the traditional resources is a 24-hour study space and computer lab available for students.

VOICES FOR VISION

In November, the **University of Victoria** will host a Building Reconciliation Forum. The university is offering this forum as part of what it sees as the duty of Canadian universities to answer the calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report.

Thought leaders from universities, Indigenous governing bodies and communities, all levels of government and philanthropic foundations will attend.

The questions to be addressed are:

- How are universities and their partner institutions working together with Indigenous communities to answer the Calls to Action?



- What are the obstacles to universities to answering these calls?
- How can universities make a positive difference for Indigenous communities and students?

Discussions will focus on university priorities and government policy issues related to the five legacy categories of the TRC report including: Child Welfare, Education, Language and Culture, Health and Justice.

BRINGING CULTURE TO COLLEGE

“Incorporating Indigenous ways of knowing, being, doing and relating” is a stated goal of the Aboriginal Service Plan at **Camosun College**. This goal further states that Indigenous ways of seeing and experiencing the world are reflected in the way the college operates.

A foreseeable benefit, according to the published plan is that non-Indigenous students will come away from Camosun better prepared to live alongside, negotiate with and build better relationships with Indigenous people.

Camosun has working partnerships with 10 First Nations as well as the Indigenous departments at four school boards.

prepared to live alongside, negotiate with and build better relationships with Indigenous people.

STUDY, CREATE, ACTION!

The Aboriginal legacy of story telling meets a high technology education program at **Capilano University** that leads Aboriginal students to careers in movie production.

The Indigenous Independent Digital Filmmaking Program provides creative and technical training for Indigenous students looking for a career in film and TV production. The Indigenous instructors are leading industry professionals.



The two-year diploma program covers a range of areas including scriptwriting, shooting and post-production. Diploma students are able to apply for entry for a third year to earn a Bachelor of Motion Picture Arts at CapU.

covers a range of areas including scriptwriting, shooting and post-production.

Other Indigenous-focused programs at CapU include:

- + Lil'wat Nation Language and Culture
- + Sechelt Nation Language and Culture Certificate
- + Squamish Nation Language and Culture Certificate

INCLUSIVE VISIONARY APPROACH

Cultural events are a critical link to inclusion and awareness of Aboriginal peoples according to **North West Community College**. Extensive surveys conducted among Aboriginal students by the college confirm this view.

The number of cultural and spiritual events conducted at

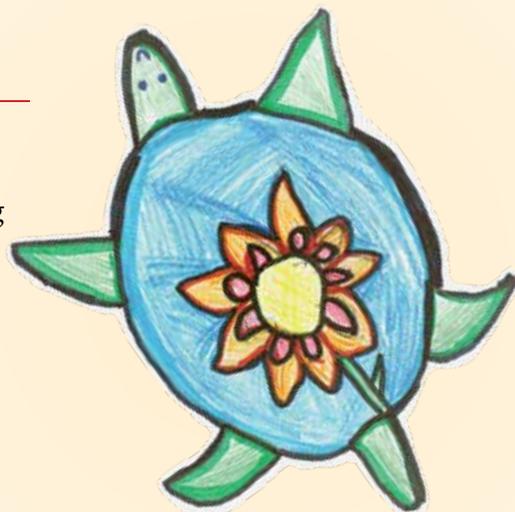
each of the college's five campuses ranges from 3 to 8 with as many as 75 participants at each. This is a key element of the college's Aboriginal Study Plan that strives for a program offering and learning environment that is relevant, responsive, respectful and receptive to Aboriginal learners.

The college plans to continue the circulation of confidential feedback forms to Aboriginal students inviting their suggestions for building on the goals. The number of Aboriginal students enrolled nears 500 and they achieved 1500 course completions in the past year.

relevant, responsive, respectful and receptive to Aboriginal learners.

PROGRESS THROUGH PLANNING

At **Vancouver Island University**, an annual Aboriginal Service plan is developed and implemented collaboratively with Aboriginal communities. It is submitted annually to the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training.



Aboriginal communities throughout BC are engaged in a creative, energetic mix of programs to enhance the educational experience of their young people. The goals are to prepare them for career success, leadership and community involvement.

BUILDING CHILDREN AND COMMUNITIES

The mission statement of the Band School operated by the **Lower Nicola Indian Band** illustrates the integration between education and community vitality. It states:

“ Our school, in partnership with family and community, will develop each student’s intellectual, spiritual, emotional and physical well being within the context of the Nle?kepmx culture and the Provincial curriculum”.

The school is independent but follows BC curriculum, employs teachers with BC certificates combined with knowledge of indigenous culture. The facility has a full gymnasium, computer lab and is close to indigenous cultural resources.

The education process can start before the child is of school age through what is called the Little Stars Head Start program. It is offered in the community and provides children with opportunities to develop a positive sense of themselves and a desire for learning before starting school.

For older students nearing graduation, the school has a Career Development Department. It defines career development, as “the lifelong process of managing learning, work, leisure and transitions in order to move toward a personally determined

and evolving preferred future”. The school offers workshops and connections to regional employers to help students attain their career aspirations.

to move toward a personally determined and evolving preferred future

ACTIVE CULTURAL EDUCATION APPROACH

Integrating provincial curriculum and cultural education can mean moving Aboriginal students from computer labs to gathering traditional medicines in the same day.

This is an illustration of the educational discipline at the school operated by the **Nuxalk First Nation**. Students strive for high standing in the BC curriculum while engaging in classes and activities where they learn the Nuxalk language, history, carving and other

cultural activities. The educators firmly believe that an active approach is essential to understanding Nuxalk perspectives and values.

Engaging the children through stories, songs and dances helps them learn about ethics, religion, politics, biology, wildlife, traditional medicine and other related topics.

Oral teachings are reinforced through involvement of the students in daily and seasonal activities such as hunting, fishing and the gathering of foods and medicines.



These are some of their stories.



PURPOSE STATEMENTS

The **Cheam First Nation** provides an insightful statement of purpose for its Education Department.

The statement gives insight into what drives the educational goals of many First Nations. It states:

“Cheam First Nation strives to promote learning and to provide life-skills education, free from economic worries”.

The employment participation rates for many First Nations are far below provincial averages meaning that education plays a critical role in planning for citizens.

An Education Department Philosophy Statement from the **Canim Lake Band** reflects a similar sense of priorities. It says in part:

“We believe strongly that education is the means by which all of our students are given the opportunity to develop holistically. This will allow each student to participate fully and without reservation, in the cultural, social, political and economic life of his or her choice.

life-skills education, free from economic worries.



NATURE AS A TUTOR

The **Kitasoo Band** operates Kitasoo Community School, an accredited First Nations K to 12 school located in the village of Klemtu. The community is accessible by floatplane and ferries.

The school has The Great Bear Rain Forest as a learning environment for its students. Research organizations conduct a significant amount of ocean, fish and forest research close by and students have opportunities to interact with these researchers as part of their education.

That includes visiting the bay to collect plankton samples or walking through the forest to identify and harvest traditional plants. A First Nations Language and Seas program immerses students in their local heritage and culture, learning traditional stories, dances, harvesting and preparing local medical and food plants.

This is combined with an intensive reading and math program designed to ensure the foundational skills that will open educational choices after graduation. The school has an up-to-date computer lab and uses a variety of digital learning platforms.

With approximately 50 students it offers focused personal support to students. The over-arching goal is to guide students towards becoming responsible and contributing members of the community.

VISION-DRIVEN EDUCATION

The **Lil'wat First Nation** describes itself as “a progressive community moving towards self-determination through economic development and land and resource management”.

The progressive imperative can be seen in the operation of the Ts'zil Learning Centre, situated within the community. It offers academic and vocational training designed to expand employment and career choices.

cultural renewal, holistic learning
and personal growth

The learning philosophy of the Centre is described as one based in principles incorporating Lil'wat cultural renewal, holistic learning and personal growth. The Centre, in cooperation with Capilano University, offers post secondary programs including a Business Fundamentals Certificate and a Lil'wat Nation Language and Culture Certificate.

In terms of employment training, the Centre includes a 10-month carpentry level 1 Foundation Program that includes job search assistance upon completion.

It also provides resume writing services to community members.

POLITICAL PREPARATION

The complexity of decisions made by governments increasingly raises the issue about the training requirements for politicians.

The **Lower Similkameen Indian Band** recognized this 10 years ago by creating Youth Leadership Council.

The Council is a group of Lower Similkameen youth who meet every other Wednesday during the school year at the Band office and meet with the Chief and Council quarterly.

It is regarded as an important step in succession planning.

an important
step in succession
planning.



PURPOSE-DRIVEN

In stating its objectives, the Musqueam First Nation Education Department expresses a commitment to “maximize personal academic success and promote inclusive personal development in education”.

Departmental responsibilities include tutoring services, admissions counseling, liaising with parents, operating homework clubs and maintaining linkages with post-secondary institutions and regional school boards.

The Clovis Aboriginal people who became extinct 12000 years ago lived from Alaska to South America and ocean to ocean. They developed hunting tools that spread throughout both continents.



CAREERS, CULTURE AND CONFIDENCE

Medicine wheels were circular structures created with wood spokes within a stone circle. The Majorville Wheel in Alberta has been carbon dated to 3500 BC.



Aboriginal educators carefully balance the challenges of preparing students for careers in a dynamically changing work environment while grounding them in traditional culture.

This is on display on the programs and principle statements of the Education Department at the **Penticton Indian Band**.

combining career preparation with a foundation of cultural learning

The department has a published philosophy statement that captures its beliefs about the purpose of education. It states in part

“We believe:

- Education promotes, perpetuates and strengthens our culture and language
- Quality programs prepare our students for entry into post-secondary education or the workforce
- Education prepares students for total living, promotes self-identity, self-reliance and a desire for lifelong learning”

Among the stated purposes of the Band Education Centre are clear statements about combining career preparation with a foundation of cultural learning. They are not seen as isolated but rather mutually

supportive learning outcomes. A sense of identity builds confidence, which is a key element of career success. This is why the Band Education Centre provides in-depth cultural education as well as the services of a professional career counselor.

Not overlooked by the Band are residents who have career aspirations but are restricted by disabilities or age. A facility called The Footprints Centre offers technology training and pre-employment counseling to people in these categories. Programs include a 12-week pre-employment mentorship program and free on-line computer skills training.

TWO TRACK APPROACH

The Seabird College and Adult Education, operated by the **Seabird Island Band**, is an accredited private post-secondary institution under BC legislation. The college offers students an opportunity to earn a BC Adult Dogwood Certificate at any age. The institution uses an innovative approach, which enables students to acquire their provincial academic credentials along with receiving trade or vocation training at the same time.



The college was founded in 2008. Its mission states that it is committed to providing the best services in order to help students attain their personal and career development goals.

ACHIEVEMENT ALLOWANCE

The **Toquaht First Nation** encourages academic achievement through an incentive program called the “ Good Grades Allowance”.

Submitting their report cards to the Nation’s office throughout the school year within two weeks of receiving the card can reward Toquaht students from Grades 1 to 12. The program does not pay a lump sum at the end of the year as it is designed to encourage continuous progress.

FOCUS AND VISION

The **Upper Nicola Indian Band** operates a community-based school with the slogan “Quality Education with an Indigenous Focus”.

Built in 1990 with full cooperation of community members and staff, the shared commitment is to create lifelong learners. The school is used for many community events of a cultural nature that become part of the educational experience. Academic achievement in the BC curriculum receives a high level of community recognition.

TRADITIONAL TERRITORY BRIDGES

The **City of Vancouver** is not listed among First Nations communities although is situated on traditional territory.

Recognizing this and looking ahead, the city will soon employ an Indigenous Arts and Culture Planner. The position will work on strategic planning, relationship development and stewardship related to arts, culture and creativity with the

Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations (MST Nations) and Urban Indigenous communities. A relationship-based approach will

be used to manage projects and review existing practices and programs. The vision is to strengthen and build relationships with Aboriginal partners and advance work related to their interests.

Among the anticipated tasks related to the position will be:

- Building visibility for Indigenous cultures through public events
- Recommending mentorship opportunities for Indigenous artists related to career development
- Facilitating increased cultural competence of city staff

to strengthen and build relationships with
Aboriginal partners

YOUR JOB HOPE IS OUR JOB

The **Westbank First Nation** offers a suite of services to support what it defines as the best educational and employment opportunities outcomes.

Part of this commitment involves a 14-week life skills program delivered three times a year to members of the nation who are on income assistance or are under-skilled. Students learn basic personal development and employment-ready skills to prepare for future employment or



education. Topics include resume writing, basic math, English classes, job interview preparation as well as guidance for the healthy life style required for career or academic success.

basic personal development and
employment-ready skills

HEALTHY EDUCATION APPROACH

The **Ashcroft Indian Band** identifies social development as a key part of its “go forward strategy”.

The Band’s Health Centre offers job counseling services to Band members as well as guidance on resume writing, interviews and job searching. Prolonged unemployment is rightly seen as a health issue. Career education programs can address that issue.

guidance on resume writing, interviews
and job searching

AN INSPIRING FORCE

A national Indigenous-led charity called **Indspire** invests in education programs for Indigenous people across Canada.

The vision statement of the organization emphasizes that helping Indigenous people achieve their highest potential will enrich Canada as a whole. The stated priorities of Indspire, stretching out to 2022 include:

- To improve programs and initiatives to produce outstanding indigenous education and socioeconomic outcomes.
- Enhance recognition of innovative leadership in Indigenous education



In 2017-18, Indspire awarded \$14.2 million through 4900 scholarships and bursaries to Indigenous students across Canada. One of the recipients in BC was the **Heiltsuk First Nation** where members received \$30,000 in post-secondary support.

The CEO of Indspire is Roberta Jamieson, a **Mohawk** woman who was the first Aboriginal woman in Canada to earn a law degree. She was also the first woman Ombudsman for the province of Ontario. Under her leadership, fund disbursements of scholarships for First Nations students have increased sevenfold.

helping Indigenous people achieve their
highest potential will enrich
Canada as a whole



PROMOTING LEADERSHIP GROWTH

Programs to help Indigenous youth contribute to their communities are a priority of the BC Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation.

The goals of the Ministry in this context include helping youth create their own opportunities and initiating projects related to leadership development.

One such program receiving ministry support is the Unified Aboriginal Youth Collective (UAYC). It has a number of strategic priorities including:

- Support and create opportunities to develop and enhance indigenous youth leadership
- Advocate for indigenous youth representation and participation in BC
- Represent indigenous youth in a working relationship with governing bodies in areas of legislation, policy, programs and services

Members of the UAYC include:

- First Nations Youth Council of BC
- BC Provincial Aboriginal Youth Council
- Knowledgeable Aboriginal Youth Association
- Metis Youth British Columbia

initiating projects related
to leadership development

Archeologists contend that that the first city in North America, now called Poverty Point, existed 3500 years ago in northern Louisiana. Explorations indicate it had a population of 4000 and existed for more than 1000 years.



IS THIS A TIME OF SECOND CONTACT?

The term “First Contact” is used to describe the period beginning in the late fifteenth century when Europeans first landed in North America. There is physical evidence that the Vikings landed 500 years before that. Although they briefly established communities that are visible today, the Vikings didn’t stay too long. So they rarely grouped under the term “First Contact”.

The Europeans who did arrive at that time were from countries where human rights were largely non-existent. They had scarce or no knowledge of the diverse cultures that had occupied this land for thousands of years. Most were impoverished. Many were rejected from their own lands and eager to get access to any land that would offer sustenance and survival. Shortly after the first contact, massive immigration occurred with resulting encroachments on Indigenous territories in spite of fleeting treaties.

Given those circumstances, the events of the succeeding four centuries and their impacts on the Indigenous people were largely predictable in retrospect.

We are now in a period of what could be called Second Contact. Largely due to the efforts of Aboriginal leaders and visionary non-Indigenous thinkers, a new era is unfolding at staggering speed. The changes to date and to come are immense. What might they entail?

For governments, after decades of confining Aboriginal policy matters to one federal department or a single provincial ministry, interaction on policy and programs has broadened immensely in recent years. There appears to be a clear recognition on all sides that this must expand. Undoubtedly it will.

The education system has been a leading force in the spirit of Second Contact. Culturally sensitive education choices flourish in public institutions while support for Indigenous based education programs grows. There is a race to prepare Aboriginal youth for fast-approaching changes.

Business previously had partnership arrangements that were largely based around resource development. The digital economy is changing that daily. Indigenous people

are a large consumer group that merits consultation. Branding opportunities linked to Aboriginal culture are an opportunity in waiting.

Finally, communities are and will continue to enrich their relationship with adjacent Indigenous communities. Those Indigenous buyers are a driving force in the economy of any city.



Did he make first contact?

The Second Contact has great promise. Action will tell the tale.

VICTOR GODIN has worked with First Nations as an advisor on economic growth, partnerships, management development and community relations. In the course of this work, he has engaged with representatives from over 80 aboriginal communities.

The opinions in this column are his, offered on the basis of his consulting experience. He can be reached at startbc@shaw.ca



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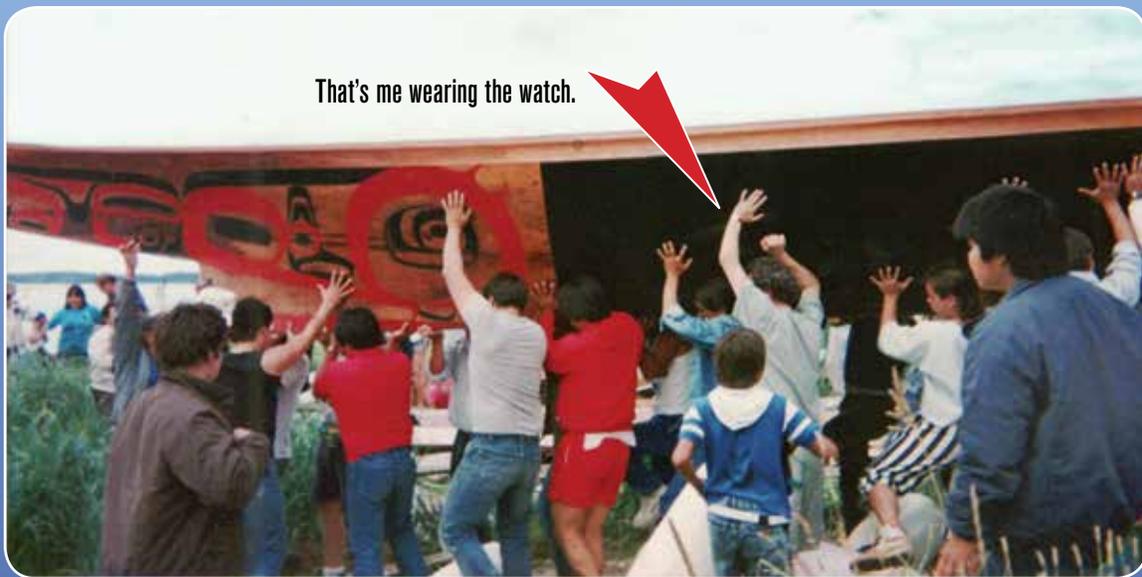
The stated purposes are to further their educational attainment and labour market participation.

The objectives are:

- ♦ Provide Aboriginal participants with post-secondary education and skills

training in their communities that will lead to employment.

- ♦ Support the needs of Aboriginal communities to respond to new economic opportunities and skill needs.
- ♦ “to develop three-year service plans that enhance the educational experiences and outcomes for Aboriginal learners.”



That's me wearing the watch.

IT CAN ALL START WITH LENDING A HAND.

Life-changing decisions can be made at unexpected moments. Back when I was deciding whether to move to British Columbia from eastern Canada, I spent six weeks driving throughout the province to decide.

On a particular day, I was driving in the Haida Gwaii when I saw a traditional canoe launch. I asked if I could help and the Haida people said “of course”. That's me wearing the watch. It was the moment I decided to make the move.

People often ask how they can create relationships with First Nations. Sometimes it can start by simply lending a hand.

VICTOR GODIN.

The Hohokam people were desert dwellers who needed water. In the pre-Columbian era they built 1000 kilometers of water canals, many of which are still visible today.