



SFU PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

PROFESSOR ANDREW PETER
PRESIDENT, SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

This has been a productive year for Aboriginal strategic initiatives at Simon Fraser University, as is evident from the pages of this special Aboriginal Peoples edition of *SFU News*.

Many individuals and groups have worked with the support of the Office for Aboriginal Peoples to make further progress in implementing the University's Aboriginal Strategic Plan. At the same time, alliances with First Nations and other off-campus Aboriginal groups continue to strengthen and grow.

Among this year's highlights was the opening of a new Indigenous Student Centre on the Burnaby campus. This excellent facility provides a welcoming gathering space, and houses knowledgeable staff able to support, guide and mentor Indigenous students—who now number over 600, including an increasing number of graduate students. Staff are also available to support Indigenous programs and activities throughout the University.

The centre is one example of the progress we are making toward meeting the commitments of SFU's strategic vision to "honour the history, culture and presence of Aboriginal peoples" and to "welcome and nurture Aboriginal students."

Other examples include:

- the Indigenous Research Institute has expanded in both its membership and its activities, which now include an annual speaker series on Aboriginal initiatives
- the Executive MBA in Aboriginal Business and Leadership admitted its second cohort and continues to gain recognition and respect nationally and internationally
- two Aboriginal summer camps were held at the Burnaby campus, including a new month-long Math Camp for Aboriginal Youth and
- our Elders' Program is a growing source of strength for Aboriginal students and the University community

SFU recognizes our special responsibility to raise awareness and understanding of the residential school legacy, and is working with Aboriginal communities to promote reconciliation. To this end, we have continued to participate in Reconciliation Canada and to undertake educational activities, including reconciliation-themed workshops.

These developments were made possible due to the dedication and commitment of many SFU staff, faculty and students. Thanks to their efforts, we have made significant progress over the past year. Much remains to be done but, with your support, I am confident that we can achieve still further success in the years ahead.

SFU museum hosts resident carver



First Nations artist Jackie Timothy, of the Tla'amin First Nation near Powell River, B.C., spent the fall semester serving as the "resident carver" in SFU's Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology. He demonstrated his skills while carving a bumblebee mask and answered visitors' questions about First Nations art and culture. His carvings stand throughout the U.S. and Canada.



President's Dream Colloquium explores protection of Indigenous cultural heritage

Issues surrounding Indigenous cultural heritage take centre stage this spring during the SFU "President's Dream Colloquium on Protecting Indigenous Cultural Heritage."

Six internationally renowned researchers will discuss different perspectives on various Indigenous cultural heritage challenges. The speakers are all associated with the SFU-led Intellectual Property Issues in Cultural Heritage (IPinCH) research group, funded through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.

The President's Dream Colloquium is a multidisciplinary forum for intellectual engagement that offers free public lectures, as well as credit for graduate students who participate in the colloquium and attend seminar discussions of assigned readings prior to attending the colloquium talks.

The first lecture, on Jan. 8, featured Catherine Bell, a University of Alberta law professor who discussed the intricacies of creating and implementing respectful, ethical and effective policies for protecting Indigenous cultural heritage, especially when fundamental differences exist between western and Indigenous societies over the definition of heritage.

At the second lecture, on Jan. 22, Ian Lilley, a University of Queensland professor who studies the archaeology of Aboriginal Australia, discussed issues of ownership relating to native culture.

Don't miss the remainder of the series:

- **Feb. 5** — Larry Zimmerman, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis: "Protecting Indigenous cultural heritage: ethics, policy and practice." SFU Burnaby, 3:30 p.m., room WMC 3260
- **Feb. 26** — Rosia Worl, Tlingit, Sealaska Heritage Institute, U.S.: "Heritage and community values, benefits and sustainability." SFU Burnaby, 3:30 p.m., room WMC 3260
- **Mar. 12** — Grand Chief Edward John (Akile Ch'oh), Tl'azt'en Nation; United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues: "Heritage and politics: sovereignty, jurisdiction and the protection of Indigenous culture." SFU Burnaby, 3:30 p.m., room WMC 3260
- **Mar. 25** — Linda Tuhiwai Smith, University of Waikato, from the Ngati Awa and Ngati Porou iwi, New Zealand: "Heritage and knowledge: decolonizing the research process." Morris J Wosk Centre for Dialogue, SFU's Vancouver campus, 7:00 p.m.

The colloquium has been organized by the SFU Department of Archaeology and is sponsored by the SFU President's Office, the Office of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Fellows, the Munro Lecture Fund, and the IPinCH Project.

For more information: www.sfu.ca/indigenousheritage. Seating is limited and reservations are recommended.



Aboriginal Steering Committee drives SFU's Aboriginal Strategic Plan

SFU's Aboriginal Steering Committee, established in 2011, comprises the top echelon of the University administration and faculty, as well as representatives from SFU's Indigenous services, and members of the external Indigenous community.

Together, they monitor the University's progress and accomplishments related to its Aboriginal Strategic Plan, and help set its yearly priorities.

The 10-point plan, which was originally created in 2007 and then updated in 2013, aims to establish a supportive academic and community environment for Aboriginal people while recognizing their values and traditions. The Office for Aboriginal Peoples (OAP) oversees the plan.

Jon Driver, SFU's vp academic, says, "The University is committed to engaging Aboriginal students and communities in every way possible to contribute to their social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being."

"What makes SFU unique," says OAP director William Lindsay, "is that our current president and many of our vice-presidents are all involved and attend every meeting of the steering committee. As far as I'm aware, this is not the case at most other Canadian universities. The benefit is that our senior administration is involved in discussions and decisions regarding Aboriginal initiatives at SFU."

"This interest is very much appreciated by the committee's Aboriginal members."

Campus Aboriginal Steering Committee Members:

- Andrew Petter, president and vice-chancellor
- Jon Driver, vice-president, academic and provost
- Philip Steenkamp, vice-president, external relations
- Tim Rahilly, associate vice-president, students
- William G. Lindsay, director, Office for Aboriginal Peoples
- Klahanie R. Rorick, administrator, Office for Aboriginal Peoples
- Joyce Yan, administrative assistant, Office for Aboriginal Peoples
- Eldon Yellowhorn, chair, Department of First Nations Studies
- Mary Ellen Kelm, associate dean, Graduate Studies
- Deanna Reder, professor, Department of First Nations Studies and Department of English
- Fred Popowich, associate dean, Faculty of Applied Sciences
- Mark Selman, professor and director, Executive MBA in Aboriginal Business and Leadership, Beedie School of Business
- Felix Breden, chair, Department of Biological Sciences
- Malcolm King, professor, Faculty of Health Sciences, and director, CIHR-Institute of Aboriginal Peoples' Health
- Vicki Kelly, professor, Faculty of Education
- Ron Johnston, director, Office of Indigenous Education
- Kate Hennessy, professor, Faculty of Communication, Art and Technology
- Ken Lertzman, professor, Faculty of Environment and director, The Hakai Network for Coastal People, Ecosystems and Management
- SFU Elders' Program representative
- Marcia Guno, director, Indigenous Student Centre
- Judy Smith, director, Community Education Program, Lifelong Learning
- Natalie Wood-Wiens, coordinator, Indigenous Programs, Lifelong Learning
- Chris Arnet, executive director, University Advancement
- Jenna Walsh, Indigenous Initiatives librarian, SFU Library
- Laura Forsythe, First Nations Student Association
- Clayton Gray, student representative

Community Aboriginal Steering Committee Members:

- John Borrows, Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Law, University of Victoria
- Ken Tourand, president, Nicola Valley Institute of Technology
- Gloria Raphael, Aboriginal district principal, Surrey School District
- Deborah Jacobs, head, Education Department, Squamish Nation
- Angela George, director of community development, Tsleil-Waututh Nation
- Tammy Harkey, councillor, Musqueam Nation, and dean of Student Services, Native Education College



William Lindsay works with diverse communities to implement SFU's Aboriginal plan.

OAP director at forefront of Aboriginal post-secondary initiatives

William G. Lindsay, a member of the Cree-Stoney Nations, finds himself at the forefront of an emerging Canadian trend to improve post-secondary education and opportunities for Aboriginal students.

As director of SFU's Office for Aboriginal Peoples (OAP) since 2010, Lindsay has led significant progress in implementing SFU's comprehensive 10-point Aboriginal Strategic Plan. It aims to create a supportive academic and community environment for Aboriginal people while recognizing their values and traditions.

SFU is one of only a few Canadian universities, says Lindsay, to have a senior Aboriginal director responsible for implementing Aboriginal initiatives university-wide, and reporting to senior administrators.

In most institutions, he says, Aboriginal offices are buried within student services departments.

"They usually have no clout," he says, "and have problems getting Aboriginal initiatives underway."

At SFU, however, Lindsay reports directly to the Office of the VP Academic,

with a regular connection to the University president.

"Together, they're the influencers," says Lindsay. "They help us to make things happen."

As a result, under Lindsay's direction the OAP has worked with on- and off-campus partners to make significant progress in accomplishing a number of strategic initiatives. Some of these highlights include:

- An Aboriginal Undergraduate Admission Policy
- An Elders' Program
- A new Indigenous Student Centre
- Much progress, including increased student enrollment, in the area of Graduate Studies.

It has all been a labour of love for Lindsay, who has made Aboriginal education his life's work. His passion for education developed early, when elementary school represented a refuge from a difficult family life on the reserve.

Despite quitting school at age 15 to escape his home life completely, Lindsay never lost his dream of becoming a

teacher. By age 21 he had earned enough high school credits to gain university entrance as a mature student. He enrolled at UBC eight years later, graduating with a Bachelor of Education and then an MA in History.

Surprisingly, he found his teaching niche was in adult education, not Grades K-12. And over the past 19 years, he has worked as an Indigenous teacher, professor and senior administrator for a variety of Lower Mainland post-secondary institutions.

Now, he is pursuing a PhD at SFU, with a view to developing a thesis that will address the challenges and best practices associated with implementing successful post-secondary Aboriginal initiatives as a senior-level university administrator.

"It's my hope that I can create something others—including my eventual successor—can use as a template for post-secondary institutional progress."

Indigenous Day showcases culture

On Sept. 25, Convocation Mall pulsed with the sounds of Aboriginal drumming, song and dance as the SFU community was treated to the first SFU Indigenous Day, organized by the First Nations Student Association.

A longhouse facade spanning 32 feet lured people into the space while First Nations performers from around B.C. sang and danced, and Aboriginal vendors showcased traditional crafts and Indigenous foods.

"It was really great to have such a big community piece at SFU," says FNSA treasurer Laura Forsythe, who organized the event with a core team of five FNSA members.

"Thousands of people were looking at the story on the SFU OLC blog and talking about it. First Nations people came up to see the event, and Aboriginal educators brought students. We also had a dreamcatcher workshop where about 600 students made dreamcatchers."

While the FNSA has held several Spring Feast Days in the past, Forsythe wanted to hold a more educational event that would truly highlight the sights, sounds and tastes of Indigenous culture.

"I think people were really pleased that we had such an event. We wanted to make sure we included different types of Indigenous culture, so we had traditional Coast Salish

drummers, a Métis singer and a pow wow group, which is a specific type of music, dance and drumming."

Elders led talking circles for those interested in learning more about First Nations culture, and artists such as Charlotte Affleck and Shirley Brown exhibited and sold their work.

As well, Aboriginal organizations such as the First Peoples Cultural Council, First Nations Wellness and the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society exhibited information about their resources.

Education professor Allan MacKinnon says, "The platform and centre stage were magnificent...the perfect symbolic representation of a gathering place of learning. The conversations taking place were real. I was proud to be a faculty

member at SFU."

Forsythe, who is Métis from the Red River Settlement, graduated last year with a BA and entered the Faculty of Education's Professional Development Program this spring. She hopes SFU Indigenous Day will become an annual event.

"This event was a culmination of everything I've done with the FNSA," she says. "Over the years we've run cultural workshops and hired performers for various events, and I've made great connections in the Indigenous community. For this event, I took all those connections and gave back to SFU and the FNSA by showcasing Indigenous culture."



A First Nations longhouse served as the backdrop for SFU's first Indigenous Day celebration.



Gary George, centre, Indigenous student life coordinator, in the ISC lounge with students who are making drums.

New Indigenous Student Centre welcomes students

The spacious new Indigenous Student Centre, which director Marcia Guno opened last September, is a home away from home for more than 600 Indigenous students.

Featuring offices and meeting rooms that showcase First Nations art and culture, it also houses the office of the First Nations Student Association.

Planned with assistance from First Nations students and community representatives, the \$500,000 centre's wood and stone finishes reflect nature and pay homage to

the Coast Salish territories upon which SFU sits.

Amenities include a smoke-eater for indoor smudging, a Smart board and computers for studying, student meeting and gathering spaces, a dedicated room for the Elders' Program, and a kitchen.

"Our centre is a warm and welcoming space for our students," says Guno, who notes that the larger space can now accommodate cultural activities and host community members and special events.

New ISC director has come full circle at SFU

Marcia Guno, a member of the Nisga'a Nation and the new director of SFU's Indigenous Student Centre (ISC), understands firsthand what it's like to struggle with university courses and the transition to a large university community.

She ruefully acknowledges that she wasn't a star pupil when she finally gained entry to SFU in 1994 after two previous attempts.

"I struggled," she recalls. "At the time, there were so few resources for First Nations students—there was no Aboriginal entry policy, no recognition of Aboriginal issues, and I didn't know of any resources that I could connect to. I felt isolated."

The experience left her with a strong desire to determine how First Nations students could make a more successful transition to university, and she went on to earn an MA in anthropology and sociology. Her research examined Aboriginal students' post-secondary educational experiences.

After graduating, she spent three years employed at SFU, initially as the First Nations Student coordinator, then as an Aboriginal recruiter and finally, as acting director of the then-named First Nations Student Centre. During that time she was instrumental in forging a provincial Aboriginal recruitment initiative, called Strengthening Connections, for Aboriginal youth living on reserves.

"Strengthening Connections is still going strong and it has really helped with creating awareness among Aboriginal kids across B.C.," says Guno. "It really highlights SFU in a good way."

In 2006, she left the University for a position as director of communications and relationships with the provincial First Nations Steering Committee, and then worked as an Aboriginal education consultant for a variety of organizations.

She returned to SFU as director of the ISC last June, with a mandate to continue to provide support to Indigenous students.

"I want to help them make the most of their university experience and to succeed in their educational goals," she says.

Now, Guno feels that she has come full circle.

"It has been quite a journey," she says. "It's an absolutely wonderful vantage point to recall my life here as a student and return to see how things have changed since then."

She notes some big changes, including far more Indigenous students, staff and faculty and a new emphasis on Aboriginal awareness training for staff and faculty.

"And our president has vocally and clearly indicated an interest in First Nations issues, and representation and inclusion—that's a huge step."



Marcia Guno, director, ISC, helps Indigenous students make the most of their university experience.

ISC hosts a wealth of programs and services

In addition to the Elders' Program, the centre houses the peer cousins' mentorship and peer education learning and writing programs, and offers academic tutoring services.

Guno has also organized regular drop-in sessions for students to meet with advisors from SFU's Learning Commons, Academic Advising, Co-op Education and Career Counselling.

"It helps build bridges amongst departments and creates a comfortable environment for our students to utilize services," says Guno. "It will also increase overall awareness of the student support available to them."

Guno says she is implementing a holistic model of service that features workshops addressing not only students' learning requirements but also their spiritual, physical and emotional needs.



"Workshops in these areas include professional development, academic assistance, study skills, eating healthily on a budget, fitness and wellness, and cultural activities such as drum-making, cedar weaving and beading."

Says first-year student Kayla Mitchell, "I come to the ISC every day that I'm on campus. They often have food and bannock, and workshops. It's nice to have that cultural influence at school—a community within a community."



ZACCHEUS JACKSON REMEMBERED

Vancouver resident and Blackfoot poet Zaccheus Jackson, who was a popular teacher and mentor in SFU's first Math Camp for Aboriginal Youth in July 2014, died the following month in a train accident in Toronto. Numerous SFU staff and faculty, as well as Math Camp participants, attended his memorial in Vancouver.

"Zaccheus' passion for life, his love for words, and his dedication to Aboriginal youth will be remembered," says William Lindsay, director, Office for Aboriginal Peoples.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS INTRODUCED TO FIRST NATIONS

International students enrolled in Fraser International College's transition programs towards an SFU undergraduate degree now have the option to study First Nations 101, an introduction to Aboriginal culture and issues.

The first course, offered in September 2014, was immediately filled to capacity, says FIC principal Christa Ovenell.

Located on SFU's Burnaby campus, FIC has approximately 2,000 students from around the world. They spend one year taking transitional first-year university courses to prepare for direct entry into SFU as second-year undergraduates.

FIC courses are equivalent to first-year SFU courses, and taught by SFU-approved instructors. The classes are much smaller than those at SFU, permitting a greater focus on students' individual needs. Ovenell says First Nations 101 is part of a broader selection of courses that help international students gain an understanding of Canada and prepare them for a smooth entry into SFU programs.

TALKING ABOUT ABORIGINAL ISSUES

Don't miss the annual Lecture Series on Aboriginal Issues this spring at SFU's Vancouver campus. Five lecturers affiliated with the SFU-based Indigenous Research Institute (IRI) will speak on a diverse range of topics, including the environmental and spiritual impacts of mining on Indigenous lands, privatization of reserve land, and Secwepemc oral history and Indigenous laws. Co-hosted by the IRI, the Office for Aboriginal Peoples and SFU's Vancity Office of Community Engagement, the series kicks off Feb. 3, with lectures each month until April. For more information visit: <http://at.sfu.ca/Nsqwuf>.

A MEETING OF MINDS

William Lindsay, director of the Office for Aboriginal Peoples, dined last spring with the French Ambassador to Canada, Philippe Zeller, at the French Consul General's residence in Vancouver.

Lindsay was among several prominent First Nations individuals and leaders invited to discuss First Nations history and current issues with Ambassador Zeller.

"It was exciting, and something I'll never forget," says Lindsay. "For someone like me—a kid off the reservation—to have a meeting and dinner with France's official representative to Canada was a big thrill."



Indigenous artist/activist receives Sterling Prize

When Indigenous feminist and prostitution abolitionist Cherry Smiley talks about prostitution, the prostituted women she is talking about are friends and family members.

Yet, she says, "I'm coming from a place of love, not anger. For me, prostitution is the most obvious intersection between race, class and gender inequalities."

A member of the Nlaka'pamux (Thompson) and Diné (Navajo) Nations, Smiley is working passionately to end violence against women and girls. Last fall, SFU recognized her efforts with the 2014 Nora and Ted Sterling Prize in Support of Controversy.

The award honours and encourages work that provokes or contributes to the understanding of controversy.

A recent SFU master of fine arts (MFA) graduate, Smiley doesn't hesitate to use her art to further her political goals. As part of her graduating project last spring, she exhibited a photo/text installation, "Revolution Songs: Stories of Prostitution," and organized a panel on prostitution in the exhibition space.

She is a front-line anti-violence worker and accomplished speaker on sexualized colonial violence against Indigenous women and girls, and co-founder of Indigenous Women Against the Sex Industry (IWASI), an unfunded group working to end prostitution.

In 2013, she received a Governor General's Award in Commemoration of the Persons Case (youth) for her work in the interest of women's equality.



Cherry Smiley's crusade to end prostitution and violence against women and girls has earned her significant recognition.

As part of the Sterling prize, Smiley was invited to give a public lecture at the Morris J Wosk Centre for Dialogue. She spoke about how the perceived normalcy of both prostitution and pornography has rendered the concept of abolishing prostitution a controversial issue.

Jon Driver, SFU vp academic says, "I have attended presentations by many eminent scholars and public figures, but Ms. Smiley's public lecture as the winner of the Sterling Prize for Controversy stands out as a tour de force of public speaking.

"She showed her passionate commitment to justice for Aboriginal women and girls, yet never let her deeply felt emotions overwhelm the need to present logical arguments about prostitution and the law.

"Listening to her, I felt that she was someone who could lead a national movement to bring about real changes in attitudes and actions."

Priming Aboriginal high school students for university

SFU's fifth annual Aboriginal Students in Math and Science Workshop last October was filled to capacity, attracting 85 Aboriginal students in Grades 11 and 12 from throughout the Lower Mainland and as far away as Cranbrook, B.C.

"We invite Grade 11 and 12 students because in those grades they're making decisions about their post-secondary options," says Veselin Jungic, an associate chair and adjunct professor in the math department.

"We see this event as an opportunity to promote careers in mathematics, science and engineering specifically to Aboriginal students. At a similar workshop last summer, many students had their interest piqued in enrolling in the SFU Aboriginal Pre-Health Program."

SFU's math department, Faculty of Science, IRMACS Centre, Office for Aboriginal Peoples (OAP) and the Pacific Institute for the Mathematical Sciences host these workshops.

During lectures and fun presentations, senior scientists and instructors try to instill the belief that math, science and applied sciences are



During the fifth annual Aboriginal Students in Math and Science Workshop, high school students learned hands-on about the chemistry of ice cream.

achievable for all Aboriginal students.

"Due to a complex interaction of historical, political, social, cultural and economical challenges, few Aboriginal high school students in B.C., compared to their non-Aboriginal counterparts, pass the mathematics 12 exam," says William Lindsay, director of the Office for Aboriginal Peoples.

"Without an appropriate level of numeracy, a wide array of jobs, from trades to engineering and from customer service to business management, will remain out of Aboriginal youths' reach."

ALL NATIONS BASKETBALL CLASSIC A FIRST AT SFU

SFU held its first All Nations/First Nations basketball tournament last October in partnership with the Native Education College (NEC).

More than 200 players from B.C. and Alberta demonstrated their basketball prowess during the weekend tournament, which featured Aboriginal food, vendors and entertainment at the Burnaby campus.

A highlight was the Saturday afternoon basketball workshop for Aboriginal youth hosted by SFU varsity team basketball players and coaches.

"Participants' feedback indicates everyone was extremely happy



with the tournament," says William Lindsay, director, the Office for Aboriginal Peoples.

"They were very positive about the community atmosphere, the positive focus on sport, the teamwork and networking opportunities, and the focus on Aboriginal culture, which included Aboriginal craft and food vendors.

"For me, the highlight was observing so many Aboriginal youth carrying around basketballs, smiling and having an undeniably good time."



Illuminating Aboriginal history and customs

This spring the Office for Aboriginal Peoples, in partnership with Human Resources, will introduce a half-day workshop for staff and faculty on Aboriginal awareness and cultural sensitivity. Delivered by a representative of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, the workshop is a crash course on the history and cultural institutions of Aboriginal peoples. It includes explanations of appropriate terminology, and discussions centred on erroneous stereotypes and assumptions.

Graduate Aboriginal Scholarships attract diverse scholars

Each year, SFU selects two Aboriginal graduate students to receive Graduate Aboriginal Entrance Scholarships. The master's degree, worth up to \$30,000 over two years, and the PhD, worth up to \$54,000 over three years, are both sponsored by the Office of the Vice-President, Academic. Candidates must have Aboriginal ancestry, a minimum grade point average of 3.5 (out of a possible 4.33), and have demonstrated outstanding achievement, with particular emphasis on intellectual ability, originality and ability in research. The successful applicants for the 2014 scholarships were Jordan Abel and Christina Coolidge. They are exploring different aspects of Aboriginal storytelling.



PhD student Jordan Abel is studying how decolonization is reflected in the works of contemporary Indigenous and non-Indigenous poets.

EXPLORING THE POETICS OF DECOLONIZATION

PhD student Jordan Abel, of the Nisga'a Nation, is a prize-winning poet who is using his three-year \$54,000 Graduate Aboriginal Entrance Scholarship to study the poetics of decolonization.

"Decolonization is about recognizing that settler colonialism is a structure, not an event," says Abel, "and that Indigenous people need to destabilize that ongoing structure of colonialism."

Abel earned an MFA in Creative Writing from UBC but chose to pursue his PhD at SFU for the chance to study under English professors such as Stephen Collis, Sophie McCall, Jeff Derksen and Clint Burnham.

As well, he says, "SFU is very welcoming to me as an Indigenous person. I really appreciate all of the resources I have access to now, such as the Indigenous Student Centre. It's amazing."

For his PhD thesis he is studying how decolonization is reflected in the works of contemporary Indigenous and non-Indigenous poets.

His interest in the topic is reflected in his own poetry.

In 2014 his poetry book, "The Place of Scraps," published by Talon Books, won the Dorothy

Livesay Poetry Prize for B.C.'s best poetry book. It is about appropriated anthropology, and centres on early 20th-century anthropologist Marius Barbeau, who studied First Nations communities and subsequently purchased and removed their totems and potlatch items.

Abel has just completed a second book, *Un/inhabited*, published by Project Space Press, in which the poetry is constructed entirely from public domain western novels available online through Project Gutenberg.

He copied and pasted all 91 western novels into a single Word document, then searched for words related to the political and social aspects of land, territory and ownership.

"Each search query in the book represents a study in context," he says. "How were specific words deployed, what surrounded those words and what was left over once they were removed?"

"Ultimately, the book is an investigation of the interconnections between language and land. It looks at the public domain as a landform that is subject to all the things that landforms can be subject to, such as inhabitation and extraction."

Abel says his work helps Indigenous people recognize different modes of decolonization. It also helps him in his own quest for "personal decolonization" as he strives to discover how to become a contemporary Indigenous person in an urban, non-Indigenous environment.



Master's student Christina Coolidge is researching the importance and value of including Indigenous teachings, through oral history and storytelling, within western academia.

EXPLORING INDIGENOUS STORYTELLING IN A SCHOLARLY CONTEXT

Master's student Christina Coolidge, of the Tsleil-Waututh First Nation, is using her two-year, \$30,000 Graduate Aboriginal Entrance Scholarship to tell her grandmother's story.

Coolidge graduated with an SFU BA in communication last summer and immediately entered the master's program in communication to investigate ways to address Indigenous storytelling and knowledge in a scholarly context.

Coolidge's grandmother, Marjorie Mackie, worked for many years at the Round Lake Treatment Centre, an Aboriginal drug and alcohol recovery centre near Vernon, B.C. where culture plays an important role in treatment.

Mackie developed a very successful workshop there based around an Aboriginal medicine wheel. It represents a widely held belief among many First Nations that all things are connected and must live in balance in order to nurture the spirit and contribute to health and wellness.

Coolidge feels strongly that her grandmother's cultural teachings can serve as an example of the importance of gaining elders' Indigenous knowledge for use in academia, and that it should

be documented and passed on.

"She's the only person who knows how to teach the medicine wheel in this way," says Coolidge. "If we don't get it from her, then it's gone. She's 76 years old."

Coolidge, 35, grew up in Armstrong, B.C. After graduating from high school in 1997 she worked for a time, then attended Okanagan College. She dropped out, however, due to her own struggles with alcohol and drug addiction.

Then, she says, "In 2009, the light went on and everything changed—everything fell together. I moved here and got into SFU, and I've been in recovery now for the past five years. Since I've been sober, school has been my life."

Coolidge has immersed herself in the SFU community, working as an Indigenous program researcher with Career Services, serving as an Indigenous ambassador, joining the First Nations Student Association, and using services at the Indigenous Student Centre.

"I've had an amazing experience at SFU," she says.

She attributes her passion for communications and writing, however, to Okanagan College professor Colin Snowsell.

"He was an amazing prof. He opened the world to me. Now, I want to do for others what he did for me. I want to be a professor."

Six students receive FNSA awards

After four years of responsible fiscal management, the First Nations Student Association has used a \$60,000 surplus to establish three endowment funds. Each year, these will support two scholarships, two bursaries and two engagement awards, all worth \$500 each.

Last fall, the FNSA provided an additional \$3,000 gift to ensure enough funding for six students to receive the first awards.

The project, initiated in 2012, involved an FNSA financial-awards focus group to decide on the types of awards and the qualifications to receive them.

The group worked with Natalie Brenton in SFU Advancement.

"We're the only student group in SFU's

history to have created an endowment," says Laura Forsythe, treasurer of FNSA.

"We wanted to have student-sponsored scholarships, bursaries and awards for Aboriginal students at SFU—to support our members who excel in our Indigenous community and those who need extra financial assistance."

In 2013/2014, undergraduate and graduate Aboriginal students were awarded \$153,000 in University-funded awards and bursaries. As well, two graduate students received Graduate Aboriginal Scholarships, funded through the Office of the VP Academic. Together, they are worth a total \$84,000 over three years. Last year's scholarship winners are featured at the top of this page.

EMBA attracts students from across Canada

SFU's second cohort of the Executive MBA in Aboriginal Business and Leadership (EMBA ABL), which began last fall, filled to capacity with 30 students keen to improve their business skills and knowledge in an Aboriginal context.

Twenty-five of the 30 students are Aboriginal. They hail from across western Canada and the North. They work in a variety of private and public sector organizations, and include a provincial deputy minister, an elected chief, and First Nations councillors, as well as negotiators, lawyers, business consultants, and others from large corporations and the health and social services sectors.

"The new cohort is a strong group," says program director Mark Selman. "They have very good spirit and have performed quite well in their first semester."

Considered a full-time program, the EMBA ABL is taught over five spring and fall semesters in a series of intensive face-to-face sessions totaling approximately 15 days per semester. There are online individual and team

assignments, and online access to faculty and mentors. Students will complete a strategic applied project during the final two semesters.

Selman says the program is ideally suited to those who want to improve their business knowledge and tools while increasing their qualifications and confidence.

"Several students in the program's first cohort have already been offered better jobs and those who are self-employed have noted increased opportunities," says Selman.

"The program is demonstrating success in creating access to advanced business education that addresses the significant challenges and opportunities faced by Aboriginal communities, businesses and other organizations. Program participants are incorporating their new knowledge into their leadership roles and are making a difference, as we had hoped."



Students in the Aboriginal University Prep Program receive support that affirms and integrates Indigenous perspectives. Aboriginal Elders provide encouragement, and tutors give subject-specific guidance.

Aboriginal University Prep Program Expands

For Natalie Wood-Wiens, founding and growing the Aboriginal University Prep Program (AUPP), and co-founding the Aboriginal Pre-Health Program (APH) has been a dream come true.

Wood-Wiens, who is Métis/Cree from Manitoba, is the coordinator of Indigenous Programs in SFU Lifelong Learning's Community Education Program.

She grew up in a small rural community and enrolled at the University of Winnipeg straight out of high school, so she understands how difficult the transition to university can be for Aboriginal students.

That's why nine years ago, while working as a contract instructor with SFU Continuing Studies, she approached the dean with an idea for a university-bridging program for Aboriginal students.

"At the time, it was well documented that Aboriginal enrollment in universities was very low," says Wood-Wiens. "I felt that a bridging program was essential if we were going to increase participation."

With the dean's approval and seed funding, Wood-Wiens established the AUPP in 2007. Offered at the Surrey campus, the two-semester program accepts up to 18 students for each program cohort. Students who complete the program earn conditional acceptance into SFU and academic credit towards a degree program.

Students range in age from 18 to their mid-40s. They have varying academic backgrounds, and come from the Lower Mainland as well as elsewhere in B.C. and, this year, as far away as Nova Scotia and Labrador.

"Over the past couple of years, we've worked more closely with

SFU Indigenous Recruitment and as a result, we've noticed more Aboriginal high school students applying to the program directly out of high school," says Wood-Wiens.

She is particularly proud of the program's growing reputation in the Aboriginal community, in part a result of the University's commitment to offer the program every year.

Since receiving official Bridge status in 2010, which grants students conditional acceptance to SFU, the program has prepared 45 students for university transition. Most have enrolled at SFU.

Wood-Wiens expects to see some of the program's first students graduate with an SFU degree in 2016-2017.

"As they walk across the convocation dais, I'll be feeling elated and extremely proud of their achievements—and honoured to have been a part of their educational journey."

ENHANCEMENTS IMPROVE STUDENTS' PREPARATION

Last fall the AUPP increased its duration from one to two semesters in a bid to ensure students are as well prepared for university as possible.

The change included two new writing-intensive courses, which students had recommended during exit surveys," says Wood-Wiens.

These courses were made possible with support from the program's advisory committee and faculty partners.

"One of the courses, Explorations in the Arts and Social Sciences, which we're offering this spring, has Indigenous content embedded throughout."

Deanna Reder, a professor in the departments of English and First Nations Studies, revised the course curriculum with assistance from student Gabrielle Hill.

The course now includes Indigenous and non-Indigenous texts and works by Indigenous scholars, authors and filmmakers such as Marilyn Dumont, Jo-Ann Episkenew, Jean Barman, Eden Robinson and Richard Van Camp.

There are also plans to embed content from Indigenous authors into a general SFU humanities course, Introduction to the Humanities, which is also taught in the AUPP.

Also new last semester: AUPP and Aboriginal Pre-Health students participated as a cohort in a mainstream First Nations Studies (FNST) undergraduate course at the Burnaby campus.

"It was a perfect opportunity for our students to experience an undergraduate class—participating in lectures and experiencing the Burnaby campus," says Wood-Wiens. "Both the Indigenous Student Centre and the FNST department played a key role in supporting and welcoming Bridge students while they were on campus."

Pre-health Program opens door to a bright future

Kayla Mitchell, a member of the Wet'suwet'en Nation near Smithers, B.C., has just completed her first undergraduate semester in health sciences at SFU, earning high grades in her first four courses.

She attributes her academic success to the excellent preparation she received in SFU's Aboriginal Pre-Health Program at the Surrey campus. The small class size, hands-on lab work and one-on-one tutoring helped her to earn top grades in the eight-month program.

Mitchell had first considered nursing programs at local community colleges, but says, "I knew I had the potential to do better than a community college, and that going to university would result in a better job."

SFU's Aboriginal Pre-Health Program seemed like a good fit—she could acclimatize to city living and a big university while earning 15 credits towards a BA in health sciences.

Mitchell found that the program offered far more, however.

It led to a summer job last year working with an HIV/AIDS organization in Smithers, and then to a part-time research-assistant position with The Canadian HIV Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health Cohort Study, at the B.C. Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS.

"I'm reviewing survey results and recent papers to help piece together an overall picture of what women's HIV healthcare looks like," says Mitchell.

"I love it. I was on the frontlines in Smithers over the summer, and now I'm behind the scenes. Seeing how these studies are conducted is very valuable."

The work, she says, is paving her future career path towards a master's degree in public health.

"I've always been interested in mental health and addiction. Seeing that in my community, I've always wanted to make a difference."



Kayla Mitchell says the Pre-Health Program gave her a good understanding of what to expect at university.

Archaeologist collaborates with Piikani Nation

As a Piikani youth living on the Brocket Reserve in Southern Alberta, Eldon Yellowhorn used to wonder how his ancestors adapted to farming and homesteading in the late 1800s after thousands of years as mobile buffalo hunters.

Now, after several years of archaeological research, Yellowhorn, an SFU professor of archaeology, has some of the answers, and has chronicled his research in a 38-minute video, "Digging up the Rez: The Piikani Historical Archaeology Project."

Last summer, he screened the video on the reserve, attracting an audience of more than 65 residents who, he says, "were fascinated" by the unexpected revelations of their community's history.

Yellowhorn's research spanned the years between 1880 and 1920, representing the first two generations to settle on the reserve.

"At that time, most weren't speaking or writing English," says Yellowhorn. "That's why material culture studies—oral history interviews, archival documents, and excavations—are important for filling in the historical gaps."

To locate former tilled gardens, roads, cabins and the residential schoolyard, Yellowhorn used a method called gradiometry, which reveals anomalies in sediments aligned to the earth's magnetic field. He then identified the hot spots that would guide the archaeological excavation.

His research shows that the Piikani adapted well to their new circumstances, and had even built a sawmill to make their own lumber.

"People were very much in command of their own community," he says. "They were able to make their farmsteads work, taking on the trappings of their new life, but they also took along their old life."



PHOTO BY SANDIE DELIJSSEN

Professor Eldon Yellowhorn, left, Kristina Hannis, centre, and Simon Solomon, left, conduct excavations at the former site of the Victoria Jubilee Home for Indian Children on the Piikani First Nation.

"For example, the early cabins they built were very similar to the way they used space in the tipis—the cabin was just one open space with a stove at the centre, and ritual items were at the back of the cabin, as they were in the tipi."

He was more surprised by what he didn't find in the residential school excavation than by what he did find.

"The school had been filled with children for 30 years, yet there was no evidence of children's culture—no toys or trinkets that children keep."

He also discovered that Brocket was originally established as a whistle-stop train station in 1897, which was a surprise.

Sharing the video with Brocket residents was an important aspect of Yellowhorn's research project, enabling him to reciprocate for the assistance he received.

"If I wrote a standard history and submitted it to the library, a few people might have picked it up," he says. "But far more will sit down and watch a half-hour documentary."

"There's just a thirst for this kind of information, because nobody has done this before."

He has posted a trailer on SFU's YouTube channel, under FASS Research. The complete video is available on the Canadian Archaeological Association's YouTube channel.

Researchers continue to unlock mysteries of ancient clam gardens

Ancient shell middens dominate the archaeological record of coastal areas around the world, yet archaeologists have done relatively little research into how Aboriginal peoples used and managed shellfish.

A team of SFU researchers, however, has discovered that managing shellfish to maintain or increase productivity was an important aspect of ancient shellfish use on B.C.'s Northwest Coast.

Working with coastal First Nations, the researchers found that Aboriginal peoples cultivated clams in handmade, rock-walled beach terraces known as clam gardens.

"Clam gardens were common knowledge among many coastal First Nations, but are a relatively new discovery to the scientific community," says Dana Lepofsky, an SFU professor of archaeology and research team member.

"It took western scientists talking to traditional knowledge holders to understand just how pervasive these practices were and in some cases still are. We suspect that similar practices were used among Indigenous peoples worldwide, but now the features and knowledge associated with this management has been lost or at least temporarily forgotten."

The research team began examining clam gardens in 2008, concentrating on Quadra Island, which has among the highest density of clam gardens anywhere on the coast. On Quadra, the team, composed of archaeologists and ecologists, compared the number, size and weight of clams in clam gardens and unwallled beaches and found that clam gardens today are many times more productive than unwallled beaches.

Using various methods, the team is now assessing the productivity of ancient clam gardens when they were actively used and maintained by local First Nations.

The researchers have also expanded their research to B.C.'s Central Coast and elsewhere with assistance from the "Clam Garden Network," a group that includes Aboriginal people, academics, Parks Canada managers, archaeologists and geo-morphologists from up and down the coast.

Since clam garden walls are built at the low-low intertidal zone, most are only visible for 15 daylight hours a month during May, June and July. This makes for slow-going research, says Lepofsky, yet the team continues to make new discoveries.

Last summer, for instance, the researchers found evidence that Aboriginal people often built clam garden walls on bedrock, resulting in accumulated sediments behind the rock walls.

"This is amazing because it's not just that people were making already



After collecting clamshell samples from each layer of a midden, Misha Puckett can examine changes in abundance and growth from "farming" the clams in a clam garden.

productive clam beaches more productive, it's that they also regularly created highly productive clam beaches where no beach existed before," says Lepofsky.

In addition to rock-walled terraces, the team learned from First Nation knowledge holders that people traditionally used a range of techniques to maintain and increase shellfish production.

"Because a lot of traditional management practices were subtle and mimicked natural systems, many of these practices have been missed by archaeologists," says Lepofsky.

"For instance, we now know from interviews with First Nations that people regularly cleared beaches of cobbles and that 'keeping the beach clean' was another way to create more habitat for clams. Now that we have been taught this was a common practice, we commonly see evidence of beaches that were cleared in the past," she says.

"We're really starting to understand how much these gardens and the management of clams changed the productivity of what people used to think was a naturally abundant resource."

The team has also come up with a way to date the gardens. "We can radiocarbon date clam shells that were trapped and

“THE RESEARCH TEAM HAS FOUND CLAM GARDENS DATING TO AT LEAST 1,600 YEARS AGO.”

died when a wall was built," she says. "We also have some other cool methods up our sleeve."

So far, the team has found clam gardens dating to at least 1,600 years ago.

Ultimately, Lepofsky hopes the research will inform modern fisheries management and Indigenous rights and title to the intertidal zone.

She also hopes the team's findings will inspire researchers in other coastal areas around the world to investigate ancient Indigenous shellfish-management practices.



Elizabeth LaPensee

HEALING INDIGENOUS TRAUMA THROUGH VIDEO GAMES

Elizabeth LaPensee wants to help Indigenous peoples confront and process historical and intergenerational trauma.

An avid video gamer, LaPensee graduated last fall with a PhD from SFU's School of Interactive Arts and Technology (SIAT).

An international student from the U.S., LaPensee is Métis and Anishinaabe, and passionately interested in using social-impact video games to change Indigenous stereotypes and representation.

"I thought SFU, with its connection to First Nations, would be an opportunity to explore that," says LaPensee.

A former video games journalist, she spent the past seven years creating and then assessing the efficacy of such a game, *Survivance*, for her PhD thesis.

"The next generation needs the ability to heal, and when you throw a lot of really heavy content at them it just reinforces depression and other issues," she says.

"When it's framed as a game, it's something that people can work through and share, and there's community behind it."

So LaPensee collaborated with Portland, Oregon's urban native community to create *Survivance*. The video game's quest involves creating a real-world self-expression project in any medium, such as painting, beadwork, a film or a photo collage.

"It's an opportunity for players to process their family history or their nation's history—to process memories and come to a place of healing."

In assessing players' reactions to the game, including her own, she found the game does accomplish its goal.

"The game empowered me to break the cycle of trauma in my own life," she says. "I left an unhealthy marriage as a result."

AlterNative, a major peer-reviewed Indigenous journal, recently published an article LaPensee wrote that addresses not just the academic aspects of her research, but also its contribution to games scholarship, and her personal experiences playing the game.

Now, she says, she's exploding with ideas for video games that are more commercial and, at the same time, also articulate the unique stories and perspectives of Indigenous peoples.

Reprinted from *SFU News* Oct. 9, 2014.

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SIMON FRASER
UNIVERSITY
ENGAGING THE WORLD



Research group pens declaration on protecting First Nations cultural sites



SFU professor George Nicholas leads the IPinCH research team.

Twenty-eight experts, including several at Simon Fraser University, are calling on Canadian governments to strengthen their accountability for First Nations sacred sites and develop effective ways of involving First Nations in stewarding these sites.

The experts, members of the SFU-led Intellectual Property Issues in Cultural Heritage (IPinCH) research team, have penned an international declaration on Canada's and British Columbia's legal and ethical obligations towards First Nations sites of cultural and spiritual significance.

IPinCH, established in 2008 with \$2.5 million in funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), explores the rights, values and responsibilities of material culture, cultural knowledge and the practice of heritage research. The SFU-led project earned SSHRC's first Partnership Impact Award in 2013.

Experts from diverse fields—archaeologists, lawyers, anthropologists, human rights specialists, and scholars of cultural heritage among them—drew up the Declaration on the Safeguarding of Indigenous Ancestral Burial Grounds as Sacred Sites and Cultural Landscapes following a recent international gathering convened by IPinCH members.

"The declaration is a reminder of existing obligations and expectations regarding burial sites and sacred places," says IPinCH Director George Nicholas, an SFU professor of archaeology.

He says situations such as those at Grace Islet near Salt Spring Island and on Sumas Mountain in Abbotsford, where First Nations groups are concerned about local burial grounds being impacted by impending development, will only become more commonplace unless gaps in B.C.'s legal and policy framework are resolved.

Nicholas hopes the declaration will help to positively influence heritage policy in B.C. He has invited the Provincial Archaeology Branch to engage in discussions with IPinCH project members about possible ways forward.

IPinCH is co-sponsoring the Spring 2015 SFU President's Dream Colloquium on Protecting Indigenous Heritage. The free public lectures will feature internationally recognized experts and explore new approaches to collaborative research and policy development, particularly those prioritizing the interests and concerns of Indigenous communities.

Bill Reid Centre relocates to Burnaby campus

SFU's Bill Reid Centre, which holds what may be the world's broadest set of historical First Nations images, has moved from downtown Vancouver to Saywell Hall at the Burnaby campus.

Centre manager Bryan Myles says the move last June gives students and faculty more access to the centre's comprehensive collection of Northwest Coast digital images and texts. Much of the collection is based on photos amassed by centre director and archaeologist/museologist George McDonald.

Affiliated with SFU's Department of First Nations Studies, the centre also plans to engage with more First Nations communities to work on heritage documentation and virtual repatriation projects.

"We would like to work with communities to explore the visual record of images and artifacts, as well as texts created over the past 200 years, and make this material more accessible to the community, using new media," says Myles.

The online Northwest Coast Village project, for example, brings together sketches, drawings, paintings and photographs that capture some of the history and cultural expressions of Northwest Coast First Nations from the 18th century to today. The materials have been digitized from collections in libraries and archives scattered across North America and Europe.



The Bill Reid Centre houses an extensive collection of historical First Nations images. This photo, taken in 1878 by photographer George Mercer Dawson, captures the Haida village of K'uuna in Gwaii Haanas National Park on Haida Gwaii.

Myles also expects the move to the Burnaby campus will improve the centre's visibility and its ability to take on larger research projects with First Nations Studies faculty and students, and the broader SFU community.

You can find the centre on the main concourse of Saywell Hall, room 10073. To visit the Northwest Coast Village Project: <http://at.sfu.ca/aBxnyy>.