

## NIC NURSING STUDENTS REFLECT ON IN-COMMUNITY VISITS

Last spring, for the first time, NIC first-year nursing students were given the opportunity to travel to remote First Nations communities to take part in an immersive learning experience.

The community visits are currently part of NIC's Bachelor of Science in Nursing curriculum, but the visits are scheduled later in the program, following third year.

"We know how impactful learning from being in remote communities is for our students," said Joanna Fraser, NIC BSN instructor. "We are looking to see how starting these immersive experiences earlier influences students as they develop their practice."

The students' experience is being documented as part of a research project by members of the department.

The students came together this fall to share their thoughts on the experience and how it has impacted their second year in their program.

Along with better understanding the challenges of accessing health care in remote communities, the students came away with a deeper appreciation of the importance of relational practice and taking the time to get to know what the client needs.

"I'm not in control of someone else's health care; they are," said BSN student Emma Oddleifson. "It's my job to get to know them and to build a relationship with them and to gain trust with them and how important it is to meet them where they're at and get to know what they need and what they have available to them and that's how I can give the best health care I can give in my position."

Over the next few weeks the team will be going back to visit the communities, sharing the students' feedback and getting feedback from community members about their experience. In the winter, they plan to bring everyone together again to celebrate and share what they have learned and make a plan for continuing immersion learning experiences in the future.



NIC BSN students listen to traditional stories at Kiixin, ancient village of the Huu-ay-aht First Nation.

## Introduction

*Kelly Shopland, Director  
Aboriginal Education*

Gilakas'la,

This is an exciting time for us at NIC. We are working on developing a new strategic plan and also moving forward with an Aboriginal Education operational plan for Reconciliation, Indigenization and Decolonization.

Regional Aboriginal Education Advisory committees have participated in workshops to help guide our work. We are now also holding a series of workshops to gather feedback from NIC administrators, faculty and staff.

The operational plan will have college-wide responsibilities and actions to guide administrators, faculty and staff in the fulfillment of responsibilities to the Indigenous Education Protocols, as well as the TRC Calls to Action and UNDRIP.

Along with this important work, we are celebrating the conclusion of another academic term and numerous examples of indigenization, which you'll read more about in this edition of the newsletter.

As always, please let us know of events or activities going on around our campuses. We love to share stories of the hard work being done by our students, faculty and staff.

**Please send information on stories and events to:** [ab.ed@nic.bc.ca](mailto:ab.ed@nic.bc.ca)

## PROGRAMS AND COURSES HIGHLIGHT

### Awi'nakola land-based learning returns to NIC

NIC's Awi'nakola land-based learning is returning to the Mixelakwila campus in Port Hardy in January.

Awi'nakola, which means 'we are one with the land and sea', combines in-class instruction with outdoor exploration.

"Through the Awi'nakola program, we draw on Kwak'waka and our Kwakwaka'wakw ways of knowing and being to inform academic learning," said Sara Child, NIC faculty and Aboriginal Education Facilitator.

"The classes are structured to focus on student strengths and the language to nourish their spirit and work at their level. It's really about taking a journey together as we explore land-based and culturally infused learning – the intent of which is to meet the needs of our students and help them succeed."

Students will take English 052, which will provide them with skills needed to meet pre-requisites for many college programs and employment.

Students will also study oral and written texts by Indigenous authors in First Peoples Literature and Composition (ENG-096) and learn basic conversation, structure and pronunciation of Kwak'waka (KWA-097).

The land-based activities will vary and will include seasonal cultural activities, cedar weaving and visits to local communities.

"We try to incorporate a range of activities and experiences, with a focus on holistic learning and interests of the students," said Child.

For more information on NIC's Aboriginal Education programs and courses, visit [www.nic.bc.ca/aboriginal-education](http://www.nic.bc.ca/aboriginal-education).



*Tsimshain artist Leanne Helin was profiled by the Campbell River Mirror on her work teaching hand engraving as part of NIC's Metal Jewellery Design certificate*

"... Helin has been a pioneer in the West as a female Indigenous jewellery artist and is now taking her knowledge to the classroom."

Full profile: [Trailblazing First Nations artist passing on trade to students at NIC](#).  
Photo and writing credit: Marissa Tiel, Campbell River Mirror

### NIC celebrates expanded Aboriginal Scholars Program

NIC is marking a successful first term of a newly expanded program to provide support to Indigenous learners at all four college campuses.

The Aboriginal Scholars program is a culturally relevant, holistic program. Based on the concept of the medicine wheel, the program aims to help students find balance in all aspects of their lives.

The program was expanded to all campuses this fall, thanks to a \$50,000 donation from RBC and the RBC Foundation and saw a huge response from students.

"It was incredible to see the number of students wanting to be part of the program," said Sarah Lawrence, NIC Aboriginal education advisor and program coordinator. "It's been an inspiring first term and we're hoping to continue that into the winter semester."

NIC Business Administration student Chris Scarlatti is one of the students taking part in the Aboriginal Scholars program this year.

"NIC's Aboriginal Scholar program has provided me connections to a wide variety of supports and services that I would not have known existed," said Scarlatti. "Sarah has pushed me to take on new challenges, both on campus and off. Having made these new connections, I am now a student leader and honing my business skills on the Education Council, Planning and Standards Committee and Curriculum Committee. Without NIC's Aboriginal Scholar program, none of this would have been possible."

## MEET NIC'S ELDERS IN RESIDENCE

Elders in Residence are an important part of NIC's college community. They support Aboriginal students enrolled in courses and programs at the college and act as liaisons with First Nations' communities. They're also available to staff and students interested in Aboriginal culture or in need of guidance.



### Maggie Sedgemore

#### Why did you decide to apply to be an Elder in Residence?

I am a member of the Kwakiutl First Nation and originally from Alert Bay. I have been fortunate to travel all over the world and have met amazing indigenous peoples. It's an honour to be able to learn from them.

When I returned to Canada, I became a nurse and then a counsellor. It is work I enjoyed immensely. I worked at Port Hardy Secondary School as an Aboriginal Youth Counsellor for 13 years. When this position came open, I was encouraged to apply. It's wonderful to help students and provide them support and encouragement through their journey.

#### What does an Elder in Residence do?

I provide support to NIC students and staff, also cultural support where it is needed. The day-to-day depends on the students themselves. Part of my role is helping students to figure out what they need and then providing that support, or, if I can't provide it, connecting them to someone who can help. It gives me a chance to learn about them. Sometimes that's all it takes, just knowing someone is around should you have a question, need to talk, or even just someone to sit with you – it's fostering that connection.

We also do activities so students can connect with each other. Our lunch meals are shared with students and staff, a place where we can gather and share a community spirit. We're a small campus and small community. My goal is for everyone who comes through our door to feel welcome and invited into the space. We are all in this journey together.

## Upcoming Events

### Student Retreat - Jan 18-19, 2020

A weekend of fun activities, organized by NIC's Student Leadership Team, the 2020 NIC Student Retreat is focused on "Building Community Through Mental Well-being." It's a chance to connect with other students in a safe environment and talk about how NIC can better support students and how students can support each other. Students can sign up in-person at any NIC Registration Office.

### Thrive Week - Feb 3-7, 2020

NIC is launching its first ever Thrive Week in 2020. Based on an initiative by UBC, Thrive Week is a week of activities, both formal and informal, to bring students together and promote positive mental well-being and resilience. Keep an eye on the NIC website for a full list of events and activities.

### 9th annual Campagnolo Lecture on Restorative Justice - March 5, 2020

Justice Murray Sinclair has been named as this year's speaker for the Campagnolo Lectures in Restorative Justice. Each year, NIC partners with the Comox Valley Community Justice Centre to present the Campagnolo Lectures in Restorative Justice to present their views, insights and experiences on the practice of restorative justice. Justice Sinclair served as Chief Commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

### Do you have an upcoming event?

Email: [ab.ed@nic.bc.ca](mailto:ab.ed@nic.bc.ca)



## MEET NIC'S ABORIGINAL ADVISORS

NIC's Aboriginal Educational Advisors are available to help students with education planning, career goals and funding sources.



### **Rylee Latrace** **Campbell River campus**

#### **Why did you become an advisor?**

Ending up in the post-secondary institution is not something I ever expected or even thought of! When I went through college and university I couldn't wait to get out of there. Now that I am graduated I miss school, I wish I could go back! In my previous job working as a social worker I loved to talk people into going to school and I get so excited talking about education now. Now that I am here I feel so grateful and blessed to be able to support students in their journey. This is exactly where I was meant to be – being an advisor fills my cup.

#### **What services and supports do you offer for students?**

I like to think that I can help with just about anything. The main goal I have in offering services and supports to students is that if I don't have the answer I can help find the answer. Mainly I help students with academic advising - I can help understand the application process, planning your courses and looking into how to plan your learning journey so it suits where you want to end up. If you are a current student or thinking about becoming a student I'm available to chat. Whatever questions you have my door is open, if I can't help you directly I am happy to introduce you to my wonderful colleagues, the elders in residence or look into services and supports available outside of the college with you.

#### **What's something you would like students to know?**

I am so thankful to be in the Aboriginal Education Advisor position here in Campbell River; I have the opportunity to engage both at the NIC campuses as well as in community. If you are looking to chat about anything don't hesitate to ask me directly if you cannot get an appointment. There are often times where it might look like you can't get an appointment but I may be available, if you are not located in Campbell River that is ok to reach out and we can make something work. If you are a student and you want to get involved in the Aboriginal Education world let me know your thoughts. There are always opportunities to improve your learning journey.

Gilakas'la

## **Supports for students**

NIC offers a variety of supports and services to students to help you on your educational journey.

### **NIC Aboriginal Students Facebook**

Connect with other NIC Aboriginal Students, faculty, elders and NIC staff through the [NIC Aboriginal Students Facebook Page](#). Learn about upcoming activities and workshops, advising opportunities and community events.

### **Student Survey**

Your voice matters. The annual Aboriginal Education Student Survey is now available to all NIC students who have self-declared as having Aboriginal ancestry. If you have not received the survey, please contact an Aboriginal Advisor.

### **Indigenous Emergency Assistance Funding Available**

Sometimes the unexpected happens. NIC offers emergency assistance funding for self-identified Indigenous students. Funds may be available to help with books, transportation, childcare, groceries or other essentials. Contact an Aboriginal Advisor to learn more.



*Elder in Residence Daryle Mills drums during a student lunch in the Aboriginal Student lounge in Campbell River*