



## NIC HOLDS CULTURAL DAY OF SHARING

As an action of the Truth & Reconciliation talks at NIC's Comox Valley campus, a day of cultural learning was held at the K'ómoks First Nation Big House.

"We heard from NIC faculty and staff that there was a strong desire to learn more about local Indigenous knowledge," said Kelly Shopland, NIC director of Aboriginal Education.

The day began with a keynote speech by hereditary chief, Wedlidi Speck, followed by breakout groups which rotated around six stations to learn from local Elders on topics including traditional plant medicines, local history and rights of passage.

The day made a profound impact on the participants.

"It's hard to put the experience into words, but I would say – inclusive, respectful and safe – my heart healed," said Barb Goddard, NIC facilities technician.

One of the goals of the day was also to encourage staff to incorporate the Truth & Reconciliation recommendations into their daily lives.

"Sometimes small changes add up to make the largest impact," said Shopland. "Whether it's creating space in meetings to discuss reconciliation, reaching out to Elders when you have a question or just being mindful of reconciliation as you do your work - that's part of how we live truth and reconciliation and make it part of who we are as individuals as well as, as an institution."

A video was also produced of the day: [youtu.be/wuOruVyEXDY](https://youtu.be/wuOruVyEXDY).



*NIC staff learn about traditional west coast medicines from Elder in Residence June Johnson.*

## Introduction

*Kelly Shopland, Director  
Aboriginal Education*

Gilakas'la,

As September arrives we welcome new and returning students to our campuses and learning centre – you can feel the energy and excitement in the air as the new academic year gets underway.

Numerous services and supports are available to students here at NIC, including special events, workshops and connection opportunities to provide help, assistance and support. I encourage all students to take advantage of these opportunities. We are here to support you in your success.

One program we are excited about this fall is Aboriginal Scholars. This program was piloted in the Comox Valley and is now being rolled out across all NIC campuses.

As we plan out the coming academic year, please share with us events, initiatives and stories of work being done in departments and classrooms throughout NIC. Indigenization and reconciliation is something we all take part in, through both big and small steps. It is something we live at NIC and we encourage you to share the hard work being done by our students, faculty and staff throughout the year.

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



## PROGRAMS AND COURSES HIGHLIGHT

### NIC expanding Aboriginal Scholars Program

NIC's Aboriginal Scholars program is a culturally relevant, holistic program which began as a pilot project at the Comox Valley campus.

Based on the concept of the medicine wheel, the Aboriginal Scholars program aims to help students find balance in all aspects of their lives.

"Students work with an Aboriginal educational advisor to create an achievement plan, based on their individual needs," said Sarah Lawrence, NIC Aboriginal education advisor and program coordinator. "The goals can be academic, spiritual, emotional and physical – it's about helping students gain the skills they need to be successful."

NIC Human Services diploma alumni David Dawson took part in the Aboriginal Scholars program throughout his time at NIC.

"It helped to connect me to support services across NIC," said Dawson. "Being able to connect with my advisor and having a safe space to go when I needed support made a big difference for me. I'm so grateful to Sarah for helping me set goals and figure out where I wanted to go and what I wanted to do."

The program will run through the fall and winter terms at NIC campuses in Campbell River, Comox Valley, Port Alberni and Port Hardy. Students can apply for one term or the entire year. At the end of each term, successful students will earn a \$250 scholarship.

Interested students can contact Sarah at [sarah.lawrence@nic.bc.ca](mailto:sarah.lawrence@nic.bc.ca).

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).



*NIC Human Services diploma graduate David Dawson took part in the Aboriginal Scholars pilot project in the Comox Valley. The program is being expanded to all campuses, starting this fall.*



*Inspired by Cindy Blackstock's keynote at the National ECEBC conference in mid-April, NIC ECCE faculty and students took up the invitation to take part in reconciliation by participating in the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society's Bear Witness event on May 10th.*

*NIC Elder Darryl Mills joined the class to share culture and the history of the impact of residential schools and colonization. Students then prepared curriculum to share with 50 children and their educators at the Beaufort Children's Centre.*



## 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.



*Daryle is of Cree, Dene, Stoney and Irish heritage. He participates in local cultural events and activities, where he shares his cultural background and Cree and Lakota teachings.*

### Daryle Mills

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

The role was presented to me by some community members. I thought it was a great thing that NIC was incorporating knowledge keepers as part of its institution. I am in full support of that. I had been a visitor to classes already over the years and decide I would apply.

I am very humbled and honoured to have been chosen to fill this role and am grateful to be able to lend cultural support and knowledge to the NIC community.

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

We provide a welcoming and safe environment for our students at the student lounge, where we schedule and deliver workshops/guest speakers and food.

In my role I get asked to attend welcoming and events with students and faculty, alongside our other esteemed Elder June Johnson. June is local here and from the Laichwiltach Nations so I like to defer the welcoming to her first as I am from the prairies. I do drum and sing as I am a traditional singer and we carry many songs for many occasions - most for ceremony and blessings. Smudging and Inipi (Sweat Lodge) ceremony, and the teaching of the Chanupa (Sacred Pipe) is another responsibility I have to share. I get many requests to share about the ceremonies and teachings of Cree and Nakota culture. The medicine wheel workshop and healing circles are a common activity I provide as a cultural safe way to learn from each other. I respect that diversity is honoured here by the NIC for all nations.

In the role of Elders, we also have the privilege to provide input into curriculum and future plans for the college.

I'm looking forward to the new year and meeting new students and staff. I hope to continue to lend to the growth and reconciliation commitments that NIC has made.

## Upcoming Events

### Orange Shirt Day - September 30

Orange Shirt Day: Every Child Matters recognizes the on-going impact of residential schools on Indigenous children, families and communities. It is also an opportunity for all communities to come together in the spirit of reconciliation and hope. Events will be taking place at each NIC campus, including Elders and Advisors handing out Orange Shirt Day buttons.

### Sisters in Spirit Vigils - Oct 4

Native Women's Association of Canada holds annual vigils to raise awareness of the violence experienced by Indigenous women and girls in Canada. The vigils are held October 4, which is also the National Day of Action for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. Watch for events in your community marking this important day.

### Secret Path Week - October 17 - 22

The Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund holds an annual event Oct 17 - 22, calling on Canadians to use the week to answer Gord Downie's call to create a reconciliACTION. Learn more at [downiewenjack.ca/our-work/secret-path-week/](http://downiewenjack.ca/our-work/secret-path-week/) and share your reconciliACTION on social media #SecretPathWeek #ReconciliACTION #DoSomething.

### 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

### Luke George - Port Alberni campus



#### Why did you become an advisor?

I didn't have access to Aboriginal advising when I went through school and I found when I spoke to the regular advisors, it was very rushed and business-like. I wanted to provide support for students but do it in a friendlier way. I also wanted to help connect NIC to the community and the community to NIC. I've found that a lot of people will approach me when I'm out in the community and ask for information. It's great to be the person to help connect them to the college and encourage them to come to NIC.

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

I provide a wide variety of services and supports for students – everything from helping with funding, sending in progress reports to funder, helping students with their timetables and selecting classes, financial aid through the emergency fund. It's really about providing the support and guidance to help students through the processes of the college.

One of the most rewarding parts of the job though, is to be able to offer advice. Students like to just plunk down in the chair and talk. If it's something really serious, I can direct them to counsellors or other supports, but my grandmother told me you always have to have that person pushing you. She was always pushing me. I always tell people, if you don't have someone pushing you to get you through, I'll be that person.

I'm really looking forward to welcoming the students back this fall.

I always tell them to stop by and say hello.

### Supports for students

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

#### Aboriginal Student Lounges

NIC's Aboriginal student lounges are a place to connect with an Elder or advisor and other NIC students throughout the year.

#### Library & Learning Commons

NIC faculty will be offering writing support in the Aboriginal student lounges in Campbell River and the Comox Valley. More supports, including peer tutoring, math support and research help is offered through the Library & Learning Commons. For more information on all these services, visit: <https://library.nic.bc.ca/>

#### Welcome Back Lunches

Welcome back lunches, organized by the Aboriginal educational advisors, are a chance to meet and connect with the advisors, Elders and other students. Watch for the welcome back lunch at your nearest campus.

#### Weekly lunch

##### Mixalakwila campus

Students can join Elder Maggie Sedgemore for lunch on Thursdays.