



NIC NAMES PORT HARDY CAMPUS MĪXALAKWILA

NIC has been gifted a Kwak'wala name for its Port Hardy/Mount Waddington Regional campus. The campus will now be known as Mĭxalakwila, meaning "maker of what's been dreamt about."

Elders from several communities and Chief George Hunt participated in a series of gatherings to choose the name. The conversations included rich discussions of what NIC and access to education means to First Nations communities and Indigenous learners.

The Elders chose Mĭxalakwila because they believe the College is a place where your dreams for the future can come true.

"Naming the NIC campus in Kwak'wala recognizes and honours the traditional territory of the Kwaguł and is an important step towards reconciliation," said Sara Child, NIC's Aboriginal Education Facilitator. "We hope the new campus name will feel welcoming, especially for those who may have previously felt excluded from higher learning and create a place where their Indigenous identity and knowledge are respected."

The campus is now officially known as the Mĭxalakwila campus or NIC's Mĭxalakwila campus in Port Hardy.



NIC and campus administrators joined local Elders and community members to celebrate the naming of NIC's Mĭxalakwila campus in Port Hardy.

Introduction

Kelly Shopland
Director, Aboriginal Education

Gilakas'la,

Welcome to the first edition of our Aboriginal Education Newsletter.

We hope that this newsletter will grow into a resource for NIC staff, students and communities to share information about Aboriginal-specific events and initiatives.

Oftentimes, NIC departments are working to indigenize course content, holding events or talks with Aboriginal writers and artists, or running programs that link to communities and Elders.

The intent of this newsletter is to collect and share stories and information about what's happening at NIC, including indigenization, Aboriginal student success stories and events happening in the communities.

Please share with us events you know about or are helping to organize, stories of the hard work our students, faculty and staff are doing. Whether it is a large event, such as Tribal Journeys, or smaller events such as drum making workshops at our Campbell River campus, we encourage you to share with us events and stories of the hard work being done by our students, faculty and staff as we work together toward indigenization at NIC.

Please send information on stories and events to:
kelly.shopland@nic.bc.ca



PROGRAMS AND COURSES HIGHLIGHT

NIC expands Indigenous language courses to all campuses

The 2019 winter term saw the expansion of Indigenous language offerings to all NIC campuses. Starting in January, Likwala /Kwak'wala and Nuuchahnulth language courses were offered in Campbell River and the Comox Valley.

NIC first offered the courses in Port Hardy and Port Alberni, as part of its commitment to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action, including the development of programs, courses and research opportunities informed by Aboriginal ways of knowing and being.

Along with expanded course offerings, NIC is also working to develop a new certificate in Indigenous language, which will focus on building fluency.

"This program is intended to be a small step to fill the gap and support the aspirations of the nations we serve," said Sara Child, NIC's Aboriginal Education Facilitator. "Our Elders have been warning us for decades and demanding that actions be taken to support the resurgence of our languages and restoration of our wellness. I am honoured to say that the college is not only listening but taking action. What is reconciliation if it's not about responding to the voice of the Indigenous communities we serve?"

For more information on NIC's Aboriginal Education programs and courses, visit

www.nic.bc.ca/aboriginal-education.



Kwak'wala students in the Comox Valley celebrate the end of their course with an event at the K'ómoks Big House with demonstrations of what they had learned throughout the course.



Aboriginal Leadership certificate students and instructor attended a Big House feast in Campbell River to honour Jody Wilson-Raybould.



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.

Fernanda Paré



Fernanda is Kwagu'ł from K'ómoks First Nation and works out of NIC's Comox Valley campus

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

I've always enjoyed working with young people and I believe education is one of the things that can give you freedom. When I first left my reserve I was around 18 years old, I didn't have a good sense of self-love or belonging. I felt lost. It was something I worked on over a long period of time. As I moved through my career, I saw how important it was for Aboriginal people to have someone to connect with who they felt would understand. My goal is to be that person for students.

What does an Elder in Residence do?

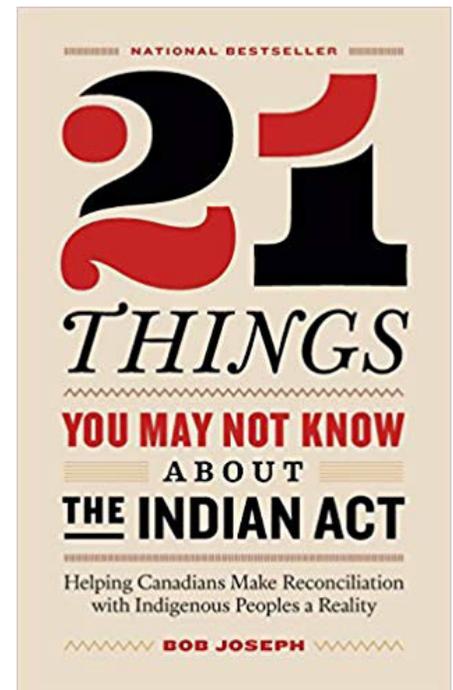
My role is to be with students and support them with whatever they are going through. It could be anything, big or small. In some cases, it's just being there so students know there's someone who is there to listen, someone who cares. Other times it's helping with larger issues or crises.

I work with the other support services that are here on campus, like our counselling services. Students may not feel comfortable going there because they don't think a non-Aboriginal person will understand. I try to help connect them with the other services and supports that are here and be a bridge so they feel comfortable accessing those services.

I also see faculty and provide support to them if they are going through issues. They can come and talk to me as well. I also provide guidance to students, faculty and staff who have questions about our culture or protocols.

Anyone is welcome to come and talk with me. For me, it's important that everyone knows there's someone to go to, someone who will listen and help and who cares about them and what they're going through, whatever it may be.
Gilakas'la

National Indigenous History Month



NIC's Library & Learning Commons is marking National Indigenous History Month with *21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act* by Bob Joseph. For the month of June, each NIC Campus Library will have book displays featuring Indigenous authors. You can also follow NIC's Twitter (@NIC_first) and Facebook (@North.Island.College) pages for daily posts for the first 21 days in June, each highlighting a specific point by Joseph to help all of us better understand the legal document and its repercussions for Indigenous Peoples in Canada.



MEET NIC'S ABORIGINAL ADVISORS

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

Samantha Webster Campbell River campus



Why did you become an advisor?

I became an advisor because I'm passionate about education and I believe it is something that everyone should have equal access to. When I first applied to post-secondary I was very confused about the process and I did not have a clear education or funding plan. I still recall feeling overwhelmed and lost and I wish I had of accessed supports such as an Aboriginal Advisor. I want to share what I know now about post-secondary with students to help them make the most of their time as a students and ensure they choose the right path for their goals.

What services and supports do you offer for students?

I encourage students to come to me with any questions they might have. If I don't have the answer or cannot help them myself, then I can at least connect them with the right person who might be able to help. I can help students plan out their education path, whether that starts and ends at NIC or takes them elsewhere to achieve their goals. I can also help them with funding their education. Other times I might be meeting students in order to help them solve an issue they might be having on campus or off campus that might be impeding their studies.

I also keep myself updated on community resources that are available in case a student might be needing support beyond what we can offer at NIC. I want students to know that their success here and beyond is what is really important to us and the journey there might not be a straight path. Sometimes it feels like the path is winding or at times, even going backwards but advisors like myself are here to walk with you and help you over any road blocks you might encounter. Gilakas'la



Campbell River Elder in Residence Daryle Mills hosted a drum making workshop at the Campbell River campus.



NIC instructors Laura Johnston and Sheryl Newton presented to a gathering of the BC Deans of Arts and Science Programming. The Deans heard from Johnston and other faculty on best practices for integrating Indigenization into curriculum. Johnston (pictured) was the lead faculty member in developing NIC's two Indigenous-focused English language courses, ENG-116: Essay Writing & Indigenous Perspectives and ENG-127: Indigenous Literatures in Canada.