

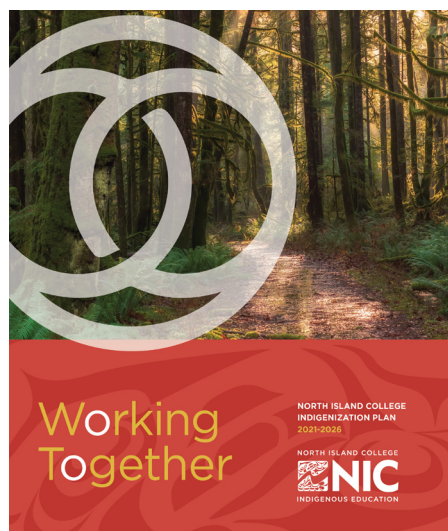


NIC

NIC LAUNCHES FIRST INDIGENIZATION PLAN

NIC has launched the first Indigenization Plan in the College's history

Working Together 2026 – Making Space for the Great Things to Come lays out steps for NIC to answer the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and United Nations Declaration of Rights for Indigenous Peoples and signifies NIC's commitment to become more Indigenous serving.



The plan builds on the College and Institutes Canada Indigenous Education Protocol, signed in 2015. In the past two years, more than 150 Indigenous community members, Elders, Indigenous Education Council members, NIC employees and students, have used the protocol as a framework to develop detailed goals and actions.

"I raise my hands and say *Gilakas'la / ʔimot / klecko* to the collective voices who led the development of *Working Together*, and who will guide our work in the coming years," said Kelly Shopland, NIC Executive Director, Indigenous Education.

The plan confirms NIC's commitment to Indigenous-led learning and reconciliation with actions that integrate and honour local Indigenous cultures, histories, languages

and ways of knowing and being in NIC curriculum, teaching, planning and operations. It includes 13 guiding principles which reflect the voices and words heard during the plan's development. It sets out 26 goals to guide the work of NIC, departments, administration, faculty, and staff to follow through on the commitments of the CICan Protocols.

"The goals in this plan are intended to be as non-prescriptive as possible to allow for flexibility and fluidity," said Shopland. "Indigenization must be given sufficient time and space to be undertaken carefully and mindfully. We hope these goals provide a starting point for conversation and exploration."

The plan will work in tandem with NIC's new strategic plan, *BUILD 2026*.

"Working Together marks NIC's new commitment to Indigenous people," said NIC President Lisa Domae. "The collective voices of Nations and communities guide us toward Indigenous-led learning. These two plans commit to this work and to reconciliation, align to inform our planning processes and support a renewed vision to deliver Indigenous peoples BC's best education and training experience."

"I want to thank all those community members and students who contributed and let them know I am committed to working together as we discover how much further we, as an educational institution, can go."

Several initiatives have already been actioned, including seven partnership and educational agreements with Indigenous communities, the hiring of a Manager, Indigenous and Regional Partnerships, the creation of an Indigenous counsellor to increase support for NIC students and the construction of a new Gathering Place at the Campbell River campus.

Introduction

The start of a new year is always a chance to reflect on where we've been and look ahead to the future. It's been some time since our last update and a lot has happened. I'm excited to share this update with you on what we've been working on and what's in store for the next year.

2021 marked incredible highs and lows. At NIC, our continuation of online and blended learning options created increased access for many students in our communities. We saw enrolment numbers go up and heard from many students how much they appreciated being able to pursue their education and training without leaving their home communities.

In Campbell River, construction crews were hard at work on our new Gathering Place and plans are in the works for a celebratory grand opening soon. This new space will provide a dedicated space for Indigenous-led learning. I raise my hands in gratitude to all the community members who helped make this project a reality.

We launched *Working Together 2026*, NIC's first Indigenization Plan. This plan, in conjunction with NIC's new strategic plan, *Build 2026*, will guide NIC's work for the next five years and beyond.

2021 was also a year of challenges. COVID-19 continues to impact our daily lives and our ability to gather in community. Our hearts broke as hundreds, then thousands, of graves of Indigenous children were confirmed across Canada, shining a light on a terrible reality Indigenous peoples have long known to be true. It highlighted how little is broadly known about the reality of our shared history and the work that still needs to be done to move forward, together.

I am optimistic as we look ahead to the coming year, of the work we have planned, supporting reconciliation and our commitment to working with communities to meet your needs.

Gilakas'la / ʔimot,

*Kelly Shopland,
Executive Director, Indigenous Education*



PROGRAM AND COURSE HIGHLIGHTS

Virtual exchange supports international exploration of Indigenous culture

NIC students are exploring Indigenous literature and connecting internationally through virtual exchange with Costa Rica.

NIC English instructor Laura Johnston launched the project for the ENG-096 First Peoples Literature and Composition course.

"I've always been interested in Indigenous issues, not just in Canada, but around the world," said Johnston. "I'm so excited about this opportunity to bring students together into one classroom and explore Indigenous literature together."

ENG-096 combines English writing and critical thinking skills with contemporary Indigenous issues in a community-building framework, making it well-suited for an international classroom.

ENG-096 is one of Johnston's favourite courses to teach, combining English writing skills with discussion of contemporary Indigenous issues and reconciliation.

The course is designed to have more flexibility than a traditional academic course, focused on creating connections and reaching the required learning outcomes and skills through unique writing assignments and literature exploration.

"My goal is to create a safe space for students to explore these topics, to learn from each other and to try different things," she said.

"We focus on community building where it's okay to make mistakes, because that's where the learning happens. They learn just as much from each other as they do from me. Each term is life changing because of what I learn from them."

The course explores Indigenousization through

the examination of poetry, drama and short stories from local peoples, which has a profound impact on students, noted Johnston.

"There's something about learning with literature from where you are that really resonates with students and creates a more personal connection to the materials," said Johnston. "We incorporate poems about Campbell River, works from Kwak'waka artists and, for this term, we're including literature from Latin America so students from both regions will get to experience that type of connection to the writings."

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NIC launches Truth & Reconciliation Dialogue series

Members of the NIC community are invited to monthly 90-minute dialogues to find pathways to action.

The dialogues are facilitated by Sara Child, Indigenous Education Facilitator, with the support of Margaret Hearnden, Global Learning Facilitator.

"The goal is to create spaces for constructive conversation centred around Reconciliation and Reconcili-Action and create opportunities to gather, join in the dialogue and listen to the perspectives of others in a culturally inclusive space," said Child.

The dialogues began in January and will run each month through the Winter term.

Awi'nakola returns to Mixelakwila campus

Awi'nakola means 'we are one with the land and sea'.

The program combines math and English upgrading courses with Kwak'waka language classes and land-based activities. Classes are structured to focus on student strengths to meet their need and help them succeed.

The program will run February 15-May 31. Anyone interested in taking part can contact IndigenousNavigators@nic.bc.ca.

Kwak'waka language revitalization research receives national recognition

Language revitalization research work by NIC Indigenous Education Facilitator and instructor Sara Child has been highlighted by national innovation organization Mitacs.

Child's research effort to recover Kwak'waka has been featured as one of the videos in a new Innovation Trends series, called Their World, Our Future. The work is supported through the Sanyakola Foundation, a not-for-profit society Child established in 2017 to focus on Indigenous language revitalization in consultation with Kwakwaka'wakw elders.



"Language revitalization isn't about language at all, it's about revitalization of wellness for our people because they know that language is integral to every aspect of who we are, and when that was taken away, it disrupted every aspect of who we were," said Child.

Watch the full video on YouTube.

North Island Gazette: Research team is revitalizing Indigenous language with a first-of-its-kind blueprint

Times Colonist: Learning Indigenous languages by using them outside the classroom in daily life.

IN COMMUNITY

NIC students building legacy project for community

NIC's Trades Sampler students are working to build smokehouses for the Tseshaht community.

The sampler course, running out of Port Alberni, is a partnership with the Nuuchah-nulth Employment Training Program, NIC and the Industry Training Authority.

The course introduces students to a variety of different trades including plumbing, electrical and carpentry. Students can then continue on to their foundation training in the trade that interests them.

As part of the in-community program, a legacy project is chosen that the students can work on. In this case, the students are working on building the components for three smokehouses, which the students will assemble in place later this year.

"Having these legacy projects is a win-win because it gives our students a real-world project to work on, while leaving a lasting benefit in the community," said Bob Haugen, director of Continuing Education and Contract Training at NIC.

Previous community projects have included a storage facility for firefighting equipment in Kyuquot and a community smokehouse in Gold River.



NIC welcomes new Manager, Indigenous and Regional Partnerships

Marisa Bennett has been appointed the new Manager, Indigenous and Regional Partnerships at NIC.

She is a member of the Ahousaht First Nation and is fortunate to call the West Coast her home. Prior to joining NIC, Bennett provided employment and training needs for Nuuchah-nulth communities and members. Her passion in life has been working with the Nuuchah-nulth Nations to bring educational opportunities into community.

"I'm so thankful to be able to continue working with the amazing communities I've had the privilege to serve in the past and take that work to the next level with this new position at NIC," said Bennett.

In her new role at NIC, Bennett is responsible for providing outreach to Indigenous communities interested in partnering with NIC in the development and delivery of Indigenous-led education programming as well as to coordinate programs with both Indigenous communities and organizations throughout the Alberni and West Coast region.

"This new position is critical for forging and maintaining collaborative working relationships with key stakeholders across the region, including Nuuchah-nulth partners," said Kelly Shopland, Executive Director, Indigenous Education at NIC. "Marisa brings with her great experience in developing strong and meaningful relationships with Indigenous communities and organizations that support partnerships and collaboration."

If you have a project or initiative you would like to work on with NIC, you can reach out directly to Marisa at marisa.bennett@nic.bc.ca.

New Nuuchah-nulth Pathways to Fisheries launched

Ehattesaht First Nation, Council of Ha'wiih and NIC have partnered on a new pathway program to help Nuuchah-nulth students learn about fisheries management.

Eight students are enrolled in the pathway program, which started in January and will run through the fall.

The initiative arose from the Council of Ha'wiih, to ensure traditional knowledge was passed along to the next generation.

The pathway includes a Nuuchah-nulth language course, math and English upgrading, a biology course and marine training courses. It is designed to prepare students to transition to employment, or continue their training in a new certificate program.

The Indigenous-led certificate is currently in development and will be based on Nuuchah-nulth teachings. It will draw on Indigenous ways of knowing and will explore the values and beliefs encoded in Nuuchah-nulth Fisheries Management.

NIC STUDENT SUPPORTS

New navigators and counsellor support NIC students

New roles for NIC's Indigenous Education team members will better support students.

Formerly known as advisors, Indigenous Education Navigators are available to help students through their entire journey with NIC, from choosing a course or program to graduation.

"The title of 'advisor' didn't fit with the work that our team was doing to support students," said Rylee LaTrace, Indigenous Education Navigator at NIC's Campbell River campus. "It's so much more than helping with academic planning and our new title and roles better reflect the important work we do to support students at NIC."

Navigators work with students from their first point of contact with NIC to when they leave. They can help with developing educational plans, liaising with instructors, securing financial

aid and helping to connect with other support services.

"Our goal is to provide students with a single point of contact for whatever their question is," said LaTrace. "Sometimes the biggest challenge is not knowing who to ask or where to go to find the answer to your question - we're here for whatever you need."

Along with the Indigenous Education Navigators, a new Indigenous counsellor will be joining the team later this year to support NIC students.

"We're so excited to be able to increase our counselling support for students with this new position, which will serve students across the NIC region," said Kelly Shopland, Executive Director, Indigenous Education.

"Overall, the goal is to provide students with a supportive community to help them navigate their educational journey, both at NIC and beyond," said Shopland.

New Gathering Place takes shape in Campbell River

Construction is wrapping up on the new indoor gathering place at NIC's Campbell River campus.

The Gathering Place will provide a welcoming environment for Indigenous students and community to participate in gatherings, Indigenous education courses, workshops and events. The design was developed through consultation with representatives from local First Nations, Elders, students, Indigenous organizations and Chief and Council.

"We're thrilled to see this project take shape and we're so grateful for the ongoing support by our local Elders, Leaders and Artists to ensure the space is representative of the Liḡwítḡdaḡw People," said Kelly Shopland, Executive Director, Indigenous Education.



Meet the Navigators



Rylee LaTrace comes from a Cree and Anishinaabe family with roots in Saskatchewan and the Turtle Mountain Reserve of North Dakota. She was born and raised on Vancouver Island, and obtained an Indigenous Studies Diploma

from Camosun College and then a Bachelor of Social Work Degree with an Indigenous Specialization from the University of Victoria. Rylee also serves on NIC's Board of Governors. rylee.latrace@nic.bc.ca



Luke George comes from the Tseshaht community, and was raised in the territories of the Tseshaht and Hupacasath First Nations in Port Alberni. He has worked for National Parks and the Nuuchah-nulth Tribal Council, and

was an elected leader of his community. He has a Bachelor of Arts degree from Malaspina University College. He is happy to meet with students to discuss their dreams and goals. luke.george@nic.bc.ca



Willow Hunt-Scott has Kwagu'ł, Ma'amtigila, Taku River Tlingit, and Scottish/English ancestral roots. She grew up in Tsaxís (Fort Rupert) and later moved to Denman Island. She has a Bachelor of Arts Degree from the First Nations

Studies program at Vancouver Island University and is a graduate of the Indigenous Youth Internship Program. Willow understands the complexities of being an Indigenous person attending post-secondary institutions including small college campus settings and larger universities.

willow.hunt-scott@nic.bc.ca



Rebecca MacKenzie is a member of the 'Namgis First Nation as well as having Scottish Canadian roots. She was raised in Chilliwack but has called some part of Vancouver Island home since 2005 and is happy to now call the North Island

home. Rebecca holds a Bachelor of Arts in French, Bachelor of Education in Secondary Education and a Certificate and Diploma in Special Education from the University of Victoria. rebecca.mackenzie@nic.bc.ca