



# Working Together

NORTH ISLAND COLLEGE  
INDIGENIZATION PLAN  
2021-2026

NORTH ISLAND COLLEGE



**NIC**

INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

# WORKING TOGETHER

Γ'αχalaβa  
Γ'αχola    hiišuu maatmaas    čččegatawłšt  
*Kwak'wala    Nuu-chah-nulth    ?aγaγuθam - Salish*

# WE ALL WORK

hiišuknišal mamuuk  
*Nuu-chah-nulth*

# GATHERING TOGETHER TO WORK

Κapiga'liłka'an's Γ'axini'  
*Kwak'wala*

# WORKING TOGETHER AS ONE

ńemukolənc ?i?axela    Κapigoła xa i'axala  
*Liqwala    Kwak'wala*

# HELPING ONE ANOTHER WHEN WORKING

Ga'walaβada'xwlas Γ'axalakus  
*Kwak'wala*

# WE WILL ALL HELP TOGETHER

hiišuu?aqlniš hupii  
*Nuu-chah-nulth*



North Island College is honoured to acknowledge the traditional territories of the combined 35 First Nations of the Nuuchahnulth, Kwakwaka'wakw and Coast Salish peoples, on whose traditional and unceded territories the College's campuses are situated.



Gilakas'la  
*Kwak'wala*

ḡilakasla  
*Liqwala*

ḡayaḡuʔaʔ  
*Nuu-chah-nulth*

ḡeḡḡaḡeḡ  
*ḡayaḡuḡam - Salish*

# Welcome

**We honour and celebrate everyone who contributed to the creation of this plan.**

From November 2019 to February 2020, Indigenous Education hosted a series of brainstorming sessions across our four regional campuses. These sessions were a reflection of our ongoing commitment to listen, hear, and respond to the collective voice of those we serve. The engagement sessions were attended by over 150 participants from Indigenous communities, the Indigenous Education Council, NIC Elders in Residence, students, staff, faculty, administration, and leadership. During the sessions, we sought guidance, input, and recommendations from participants to inform this document. This plan is an amalgamation of the collective voices of our participants. We respectfully extend our gratitude to everyone who contributed their ideas, knowledge, wisdom, and visions during the development of this plan.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Words From NIC</b> .....	<b>7</b>
Letter from the President	
Letter from the Director of Indigenous Education	
Letter from the Facilitator of Indigenous Education	
<b>Important Definitions</b> .....	<b>10</b>
Reconciliation	
Indigenization	
Decolonization	
<b>Indigenization at NIC</b> .....	<b>16</b>
Our Journey	
Our Commitment	
The Planning Process	
Guiding Principles	
<i>Build 2026 and Working Together</i>	
<b>Goals</b> .....	<b>30</b>
Institutional Commitment	
Governance Model	
Teaching and Learning	
Understanding Reciprocity	
Indigenous Employee Recruitment	
Learning Environment	
Relationship Building	
<b>Acknowledgments</b> .....	<b>40</b>



## From the President

It is a privilege to present *Working Together*, the first Indigenization Plan in North Island College history.

I am deeply grateful to the Indigenous Education Council, Kelly Shopland, Executive Director, Indigenous Education, Elders, Navigators, Indigenous Education faculty, and community whose ideas, knowledge and work have brought this plan to life.

*Working Together* marks a unique time in NIC history. It examines our actions and guides us toward new ways of operating as we launch *BUILD 2026*, NIC's strategic plan. Together, they commit to reconciliation, align to inform our planning processes and support a renewed vision to deliver BC's best education and training experience.

This document builds on the work of many community members and employees throughout NIC's 46-year history. Yet, as an institution we have much further to go. NIC acknowledges the damaging role education has played in the lives of many across the region. We are committed to Indigenization, reconciliation, and decolonization through action in the years to come. As educators, we have a responsibility to build new understandings on the local impacts of colonization and support Indigenous-led programming, so that we are all in a better position to learn from the Indigenous communities around us.



**Lisa Domae PhD, RPP**  
**President and CEO,**  
**North Island College**



**Top:** Renaming ceremony and official opening of new Miḡalakwila Campus in Port Hardy.

**Bottom:** Graduates of the Human Services-Educational Assistant/Community Support, Indigenous Focus Certificate.

## From the Executive Director of Indigenous Education

I raise my hands and say *Gilakas'la / ʔimot* to the collective voices who guided the development of NIC's first Indigenization Plan, *Working Together*. *Working Together* places Indigenous students and communities at its heart, and will guide our work over the coming years. I am honoured to work with NIC, and acknowledge and celebrate the ongoing commitment to Indigenous-led learning.

This plan reiterates how NIC strives to integrate and honour local Indigenous cultures, histories, beliefs and ways of knowing and being into our curriculum, teaching, planning and operations.

Implementing this plan will take hard work and the resolve of all members of the NIC community at every level. Most importantly, it will require the commitment to develop meaningful relationships, to listen, and to learn from the Indigenous communities that we are so fortunate to serve. Through this Plan, we commit ourselves to taking meaningful collective action and to work together to meet the needs of Indigenous learners.



**Kelly Shopland,**  
Executive Director of Indigenous Education



## From the Facilitator of Indigenous Education

I am honoured to work for and be a part of the NIC team as we strive to answer the Calls to Action of Reconciliation and reflect on our roles and responsibilities in implementing the *UN Declaration of Rights for Indigenous People*. The mandate for Indigenizing and decolonizing our praxis offers up pathways for transformative change. Exploring the concept of what it means to be truly Indigenous serving will be key to our transformation. We are located in the heart of diverse Indigenous communities, making us uniquely challenged to carry out this work.

Our new challenge calls upon us to open our minds and hearts to being Indigenous-led and advancing innovative pathways we cannot yet even envision.

Personally, I am humbled to be a part of this moment that so many Indigenous people have fought for. I am humbled to be among so many here at NIC who continue to demonstrate their commitment to becoming truly Indigenous serving.



**Sara Child,**  
Facilitator of Indigenous Education



# Important Definitions

Indigenization, decolonization and reconciliation are concepts often utilized today, especially in education. As part of the common vernacular, these concepts are sometimes used interchangeably. The meaning and use of these terms will need to be revisited continually as our strategy grows and transforms our campus life. The processes of Indigenization, decolonization and reconciliation each require specific actions that are interrelated, but they are not the same.

**NIC feels it is important to make distinctions between these terms to provide context to this Indigenization plan.** We encourage you to explore these concepts, seek out additional sources, and apply what you learn to your work at NIC.

Elder in Residence, Daryle Mills, shares Cree teachings about Medicine Wheel and wellness teachings to NIC employees and board members.

## Reconciliation

Reconciliation is the process for redressing the legacy of residential schools to advance Canadian reconciliation. The 94 Calls to Action as presented by the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* provide the guiding principles. Our individual and collective commitment to action in our lives, work, communities, and organizations is a vital aspect of reconciliation.

**NIC is committed to engaging in meaningful conversations, education, and training by adopting the following guiding principles of reconciliation:**

- The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* provides the framework for reconciliation.
- Indigenous peoples have treaty, constitutional, and human rights that must be respected.
- Reconciliation is a process to support healing of relationships that requires truth sharing, apology, and commemoration to acknowledge and redress past harms.
- Reconciliation requires meaningful action to address the ongoing legacies of colonialism that continue to have destructive impacts on Indigenous peoples' lives and health.
- Reconciliation must create the foundation for establishing an equitable society and close the gaps in the social determinants of health and wellness for Indigenous peoples.
- All Canadians share the responsibility to take action.
- The perspectives and understandings of Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers are vital.
- Reconciliation requires political will, joint leadership, trust building, accountability, transparency, and investment of the necessary funds and resources.

More than anything, reconciliation is about action and commitment. It is about restoring balance and initiating measures to address the social divide, the rampant racism, and socio-economic inequity that exists for Indigenous people along every social determinant of health. It is about the full implementation of the *United Nations Declaration of Rights for Indigenous People* and restoration of holistic wellness for Indigenous people. The achievement of reconciliation will require ongoing, transformative reformation of society to establish equity for Indigenous learners and Indigenous Nations we serve in every sense of the term. We must each make commitments, both in our personal lives and collectively in our lines of work across North Island College. As Justice Murray Sinclair stated, "it took generations to get into this mess and it will take generations to get out."

Throughout our process at North Island College, many tough questions will need to be asked, and many tough decisions will need to be made. **One of the toughest will be those decisions that need to be made by non-Indigenous Canadians because reconciliation isn't a question of whether Indigenous people should give more but how much non-Indigenous Canadians are willing to give back.** Reconciliation will be good medicine if our work leads to healing and building respectful relationships. Let's ensure that our work toward reconciliation is guided by love, honesty, truth, wisdom, courage, respect, and humility. These same guiding principles supported the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* during their difficult task and as they lit the fires of reconciliation.

**Ha'nałaxan's galgapoła:** Let's persevere and support one another to assure that the fires burn bright for generations to come.

## Indigenization

Indigenization involves naturalizing Indigenous knowledge systems to make them respectfully evident in the places, spaces, and classroom environments of North Island College. This includes infusing Indigenous ways of knowing and being into course work and programs so that they are seamlessly recognized, acknowledged, and respectfully treated as equal to all other perspectives reflected in campus curriculum. Indigenization requires recognition that Indigenous worldviews have been significantly affected or overlooked and therefore require restorative processes.

Indigenization is not simply including Indigenous content; it requires utilizing a different approach to learning entirely, one that is embedded in relationship to specific lands, culture, and community. **Indigenization calls upon us to create environments across our campus that support weaving together the distinct knowledge systems reflected in our college community with local Indigenous knowledge systems so that learners, faculty, and staff come to understand, appreciate, and mutually respect one another.**

## Decolonization

Decolonization has been described as the unravelling of colonization. This will be the most difficult aspect of our work to achieve. Over the course of many generations, Canada implemented deliberate measures to take over and control the lands, lives, and resources of Indigenous people. Those measures assigned subordinate roles to Indigenous cultures, languages, knowledges, and relationships. They paved the way for Western ways to supersede Indigenous ways of being. Without question, these deliberate actions were perpetrated by government and shifted Indigenous worldview, resulting in detrimental impacts on Indigenous communities and people's social determinants of health. This legacy continues to affect Indigenous people today.

**The reclamation, recovery, resurgence, and renewal of Indigenous culture, language, and holistic relationships with self, spirit, land, community, and others is at the heart of decolonization.** The process will require equitable measures. It cannot be something done to or for the Indigenous learners and Indigenous Nations we serve, nor is it something that should be done by non-Indigenous college representatives. Nothing for us without us. Nothing for us that is not done by us. The true essence of decolonization will result in the commitment to Indigenous-led education, wherein decisions regarding Indigenous programming, development and implementation lie with the Indigenous Nations we serve. This rebalancing will lead us to a place where local Indigenous ways of being and doing are not only perceived as equal but presented equitably throughout the College.



# Indigenization at NIC

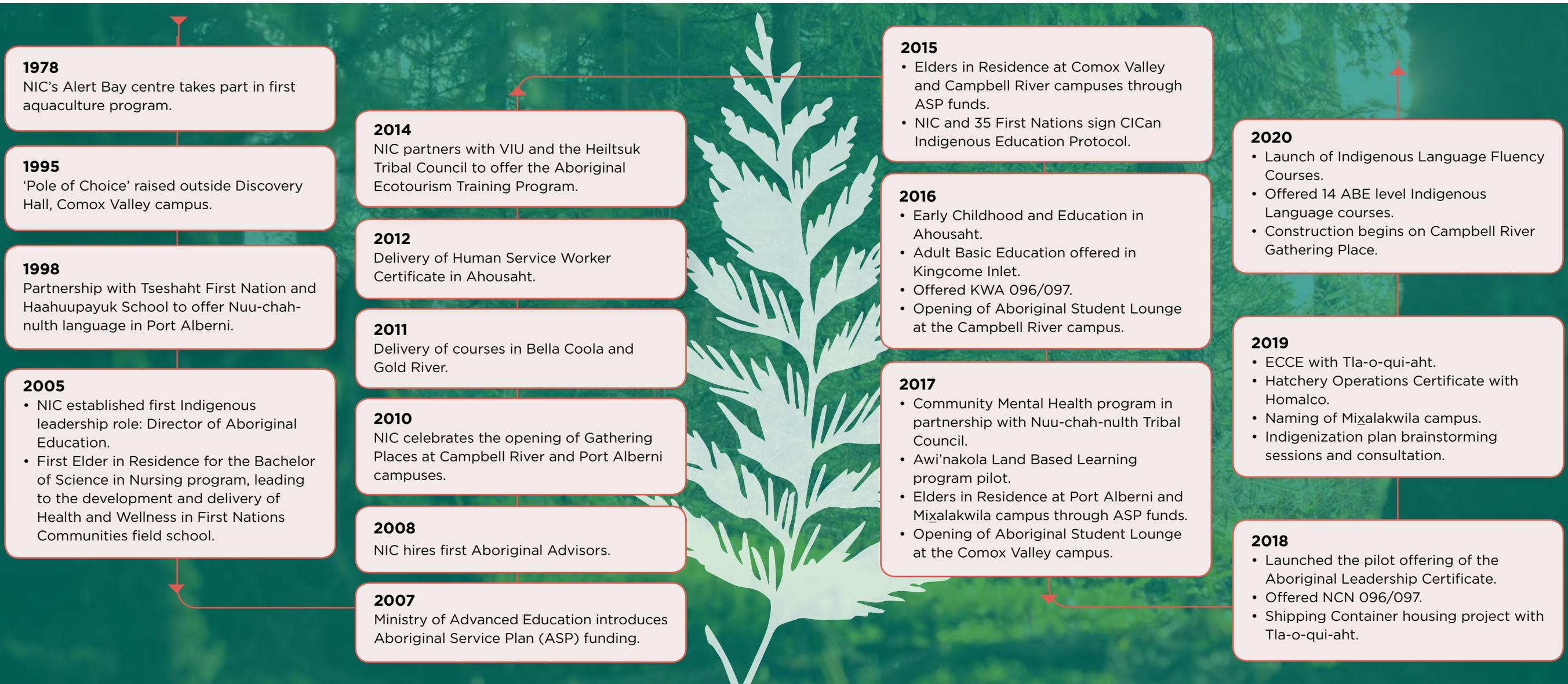


As we embark on this next step towards Indigenization, it is important to reflect on and celebrate the journey thus far. We honour those who walked before us creating pathways to Indigenization. We reaffirm our commitment to education that redresses the historical and continued barriers that Indigenous peoples have faced in accessing and participating in post-secondary education. Our new directions will help us to create a collaborative approach and collective environment, that values Indigenous knowledge, language, and worldview. **Working together we will create pathways to achieve meaningful change that is grounded in our collective voice.**

ʔuumaćukcumniš qʷaacumyin hupiićtaʔ ʔaćikšiiʔ quuquuʔaca.  
Jane Jones, Nuu-chah-nulth language instructor.  
Language learning continues to be a top priority. Local teachings are understood and inherent in the language.

# Our Journey

This timeline features some of the key events and initiatives that have supported Indigenous Education, Indigenization, and reconciliation at North Island College. While not a comprehensive list, these are some of the steps taken throughout our history. We continue to have a long journey ahead.



# Our Commitment

North Island College, representatives from the Indigenous Education Council and First Nations, signed a historic Indigenous Education Protocol May 1, 2015, affirming our commitment to Indigenous learners and communities in the region.

Colleges and Institutes Canada's (CICan) ground-breaking protocol provides a vision of how the college will strive to improve and better serve Indigenous peoples.

**These seven protocols are the foundation and framework for our continued commitment to Indigenous Education and Indigenous-led learning:**

- ① Make Indigenous education a priority.
- ② Ensure governance structures recognize and respect Indigenous peoples
- ③ Include intellectual and cultural traditions of Indigenous peoples in curriculum and learning approaches.
- ④ Increase understanding and reciprocity among Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.
- ⑤ Increase the number of Indigenous employees, including Indigenous senior administrators.
- ⑥ Establish Indigenous-centred holistic services and learning environments.
- ⑦ Build relationships and be accountable to Indigenous communities in support of self-determination.

**Top:** The CICan Indigenous Education Protocol signing at the K'ómoks First Nation Big House in 2015.

**Bottom:** A day of cultural learning was held at the K'ómoks First Nation Big House to encourage NIC staff to act on the *Truth & Reconciliation* Calls to Action.



## Our Commitment to the Future

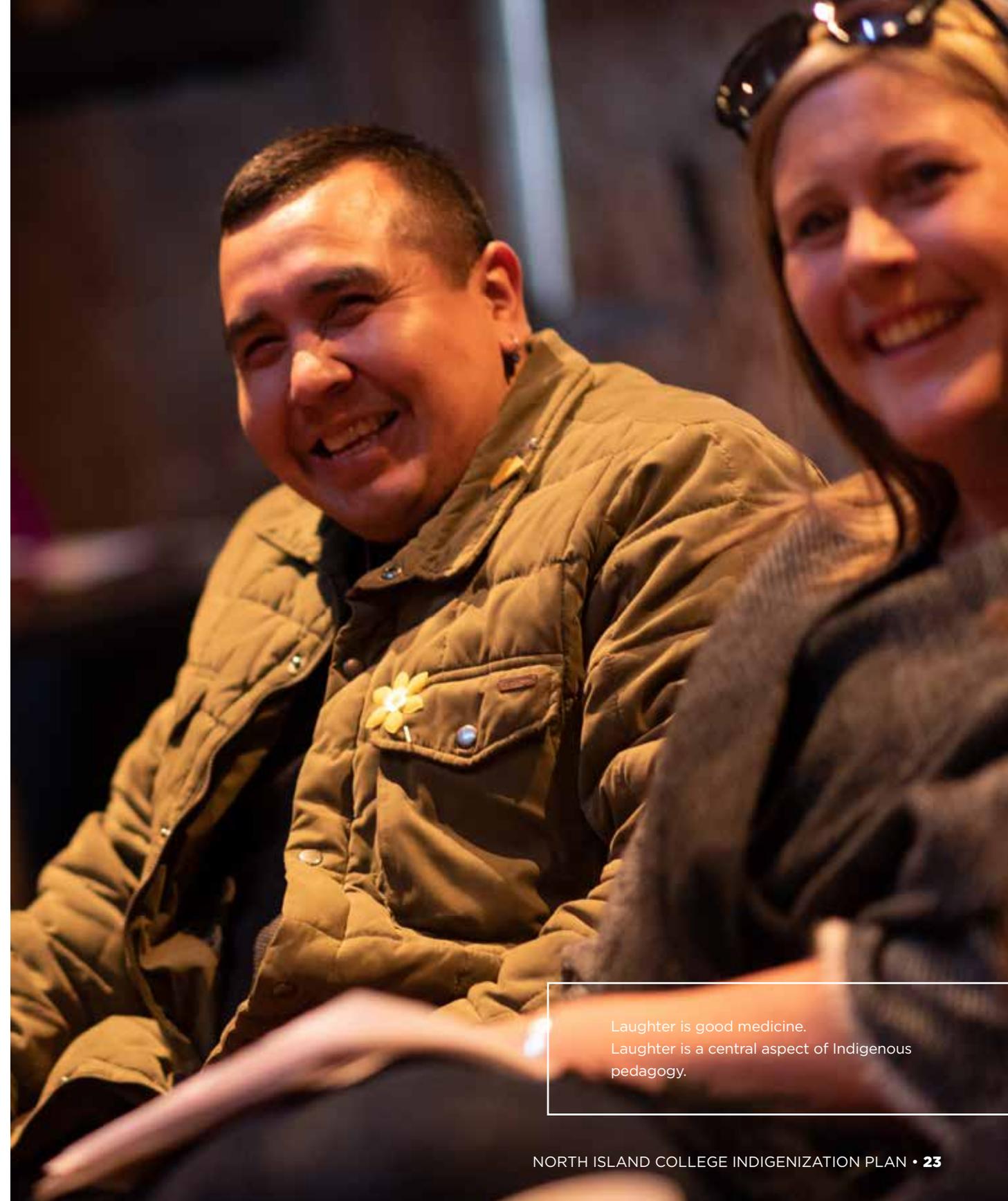
As we set the stage for implementing our first Indigenization Plan, we begin by acknowledging the role that educational institutes, including North Island College, have played in perpetuating the colonial agenda. We must acknowledge that the agenda was not only historical but continues even to this day. We acknowledge the over 150,000 children who were forced from the loving embrace of their families and communities to attend residential schools. We respectfully acknowledge generations of children who were forced to attend day schools and education systems that perpetuated racism and inequality for decades.

The ongoing intergenerational impacts of the colonial agenda has been equated to “cultural genocide” in Canada. One cannot underestimate the deleterious and lasting impacts for Indigenous students, their families, languages, cultures, and lives. Those impacts have been endured for generations by Indigenous families and communities and have directly contributed to the current state that has Indigenous students and communities living with stark inequity across every health, social, and economic measure.

Our Indigenization Plan provides a framework for reconciliation that is grounded in human rights equity.

At North Island College, we recognize that it will take generations to unravel the impacts of colonization and that we are morally and ethically obligated to support reconciliation.

In order to accomplish this, we are aligning this Indigenization Plan with the NIC Strategic Plan, Build 2026. The plan also includes goals for creating healing pathways that are led by the Indigenous communities and students we serve. An integral aspect of our plan is to create pathways for ongoing commitments by inter-weaving responsibility for the plan throughout the College. This framework must be viewed as a guide for action, ongoing commitment, and collective responsibility across North Island College. .



Laughter is good medicine.  
Laughter is a central aspect of Indigenous pedagogy.

Our vision will be achieved by interweaving actions rooted in commitment and meaningful action across all departments. Each department will have roles and responsibilities in our collective goal to create environments that support students, faculty, and staff to develop intercultural understanding, empathy, mutual respect, and honour the rights of all people we serve. Reconciliation also requires that we form commitments to address the social and economic inequities that have existed for Indigenous peoples, communities, and students for generations.

We view our Indigenization Plan as a framework for collective growth and change; it is a living document that will evolve as our work transforms our perceptions, historic, and contemporary relationships. It is grounded in our belief that we must move forward in ways that both respect and value local Indigenous communities. At the same time, we must nurture intercultural understanding to help us work across our differences. Together, we will make North Island College a better place for the Indigenous students we serve as well as for all who find their way to our doorstep. Our shared responsibility for living up to the plan's values and following through on our collective actions will lead to transformative change.

We end by gratefully acknowledging the thoughtful input of our college community coupled with the voices of the Indigenous communities we serve.

Let the voices of those communities be our guide as we journey toward collective actions that will improve and enhance Indigenous programming across our college and benefit everyone who walks through our doorways.

We ask you to consider this guide as the foundation for ongoing conversations and consultation that will change circumstances and provide new opportunities for building relationships rooted in respect, responsibility, and reciprocity.



**Top:** Drummers and dancers welcome NIC students at the Comox Valley Campus.

**Bottom:** Indigenous Language Instructor and Elder in Residence, June Johnson, teaches Liqwala language to a class at the Campbell River Campus.

# The Planning Process

Under the guidance and direction of the Indigenous Education Council, work began in 2019 to develop this Indigenization Plan. As part of our ongoing commitment to Indigenous learners and communities, the office of Indigenous Education hosted a variety of brainstorming sessions to seek advice, input, and recommendations from the Indigenous Education Council, NIC Elders in Residence, staff, faculty, administration, leadership, students, and Indigenous communities. These sessions took place from November 2019 until February of 2020. Participant voices were captured during engagement sessions hosted at each of the four campuses. During the half-day sessions, approximately 150 participants shared their knowledge and visions for Indigenization, reconciliation, and decolonization at NIC. Additional student input was gathered and integrated via the annual Indigenous Student Satisfaction Survey.

The process drew on the CIGan Indigenous Education Protocol Agreement and its seven commitments as a framework. Participants identified and prioritized goals and actions under each commitment. This plan has been created by amalgamating all of the top priorities into a list of 26 goals. An accompanying operational framework includes related actions, accountability, outcomes, and evaluation. This document will be an living document with college wide responsibilities, where specific actions will be reviewed and amended on an ongoing basis. Strong emphasis was given to Indigenous and collective voice throughout the plan.



## Guiding Principles of Indigenization

These guiding principles reflect the voices and words heard during our brainstorming sessions. Please allow these values and principles to guide your heart and mind so that we may all walk this path, and work together, in a good way.

**“Indigenization is an evolutionary process” (S.Child 2019) that cannot be expected to be reached quickly or easily. It is a long-term commitment with no end. It is a fluid process that will take time, patience, persistence, and care. A five-year plan is only a step along the way.**

- ① Strive to be leaders in reconciliation, decolonization, and Indigenization.
- ② Forming strong relationships with Indigenous communities is foundational to meaningful Indigenization.
- ③ Continually reinforcing and strengthening relationships with Indigenous communities is foundational to meaningful Indigenization.
- ④ Ongoing sharing of ideas and best practices.
- ⑤ Nothing for us without us.
- ⑥ This process must be Indigenous-led.
- ⑦ Foster deep respect for the lands and people.
- ⑧ Conducting ceremony honouring the pathway to celebrate key milestones and people.
- ⑨ Maintain a regional approach to recognize the diversity of language and cultural traditions of all Indigenous Nations we serve.
- ⑩ Led by culturally grounded and knowledgeable Indigenous people.
- ⑪ Accountability to Indigenous people on whose lands we stand.
- ⑫ Incorporating ceremony and honouring the path to celebrate key milestones and people.
- ⑬ Apply holistic Indigenous methodology and pedagogy.

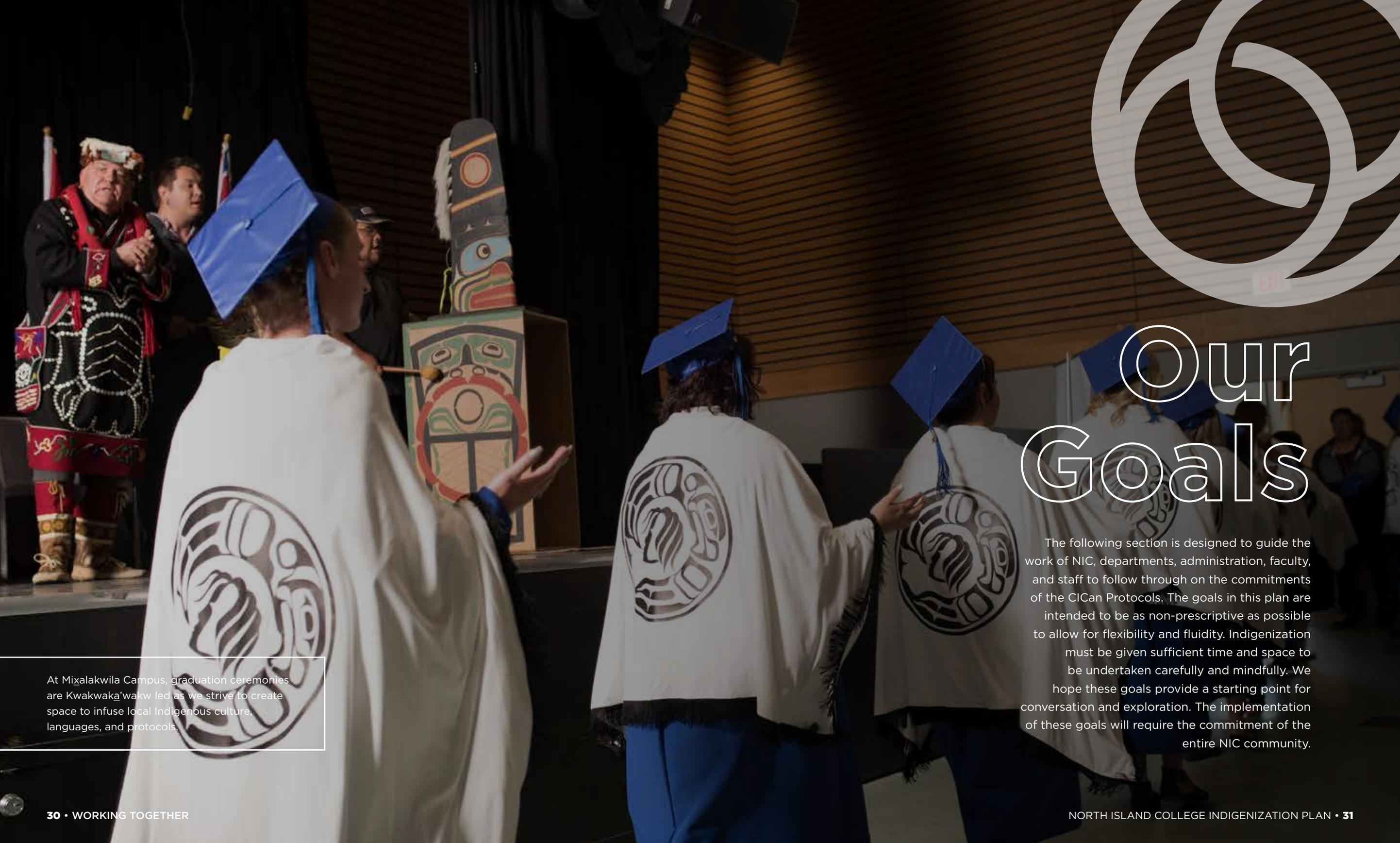
## Working together toward lasting and meaningful reconciliation

The Indigenous Education Department, in collaboration with NIC’s Indigenous Education Council, is grateful to co-launch Working Together, NIC’s Indigenization Plan, alongside BUILD 2026, NIC’s five-year strategic plan.

This is the first Indigenization Plan in NIC’s history, and it represents college-wide responsibilities toward Indigenization, reconciliation, and decolonization.

The two plans will work in tandem over the next five years with separate and supported goals, measures, and targets that work toward lasting and meaningful reconciliation. The specific actions that enable the implementation of our goals are documented and continually updated in our Indigenization Operational Action Plan.





# Our Goals

The following section is designed to guide the work of NIC, departments, administration, faculty, and staff to follow through on the commitments of the CIGan Protocols. The goals in this plan are intended to be as non-prescriptive as possible to allow for flexibility and fluidity. 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 implementation of these goals will require the commitment of the entire NIC community.

At Mixelakwila Campus, graduation ceremonies are Kwakwaka'wakw led as we strive to create space to infuse local Indigenous culture, languages, and protocols.

## Institutional Commitment

NIC will commit to making Indigenous education a priority.

### Goal 1:

Establish an operating budget to grow and meet the needs of this plan.

### Goal 2:

Ensure departments/faculties identify and act on specific commitments to reconciliation and Indigenization.

### Goal 3:

Commit ongoing/multi-year funds to support Indigenous Education programming, services, and Indigenization efforts.

## Governance Model

NIC will ensure governance structures recognize and respect Indigenous peoples.

### Goal 1:

Encourage and advocate for increased Indigenous representation on NIC Boards, Councils, and Committees.

### Goal 2:

Explore and utilize decolonized and Indigenized decision-making processes.

### Goal 3:

Review policies and operational practices to ensure they support the recognition of Indigenous people's human rights and the equity and inclusion of Indigenous students, faculty, staff, and community members.



The specific actions that enable the implementation of our goals are documented and continually updated in our Indigenization Operational Action Plan.

## Teaching and Learning

NIC will implement the intellectual and cultural traditions of Indigenous peoples through curriculum and learning approaches relevant to learners and communities.

### Goal 1:

Develop and implement an Indigenous curriculum sub-committee.

### Goal 2:

Ensure Indigenous histories, worldview, knowledge, and pedagogies are relevantly, accurately, and respectfully integrated.

### Goal 3:

Departments address and respond to the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission's* Calls to Action.

### Goal 4:

Provide college-wide mentorship and support to faculty members to Indigenize teaching and learning.

### Goal 5:

Develop a website that assists faculty, staff, and students to access resources, information, publications, and reports about Indigenous issues, pedagogy, practice, and knowledge.



The specific actions that enable the implementation of our goals are documented and continually updated in our Indigenization Operational Action Plan.

## Understanding and Reciprocity

NIC will support students and employees to increase understanding and reciprocity among Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

### Goal 1:

Develop and incorporate a multi-tiered local core competency training experience.

### Goal 2:

Ensure academic programs include content in at least one course, which explores Indigenous histories and identifies how Indigenous issues intersect with the field of study.

### Goal 3:

Develop a communications strategy to ensure that every current and prospective student, faculty, and staff member at NIC is aware of the traditional territories and Indigenous Nations on whose land NIC campuses and facilities are situated.

### Goal 4:

Develop ongoing annual events that celebrate Indigenous people and culture, and build awareness on Indigenous topics.

### Goal 5:

Develop educational tools and resources that promote the implementation of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission's* Calls to Action.

## Indigenous Employee Recruitment

NIC will commit to increasing the number of Indigenous employees with ongoing appointments throughout the institution, including Indigenous senior administrators.

### Goal 1:

Baseline current, self-identified Indigenous employees.

### Goal 2:

Ensure institutional hiring and human resource development strategies identify goals and approaches for increasing the number of Indigenous staff and faculty.

### Goal 3:

Integrate language within job descriptions and postings that speaks to a commitment to developing competency towards Indigenization.



The specific actions that enable the implementation of our goals are documented and continually updated in our Indigenization Operational Action Plan.

## Learning Environment and Holistic Services

NIC will establish Indigenous-centred holistic services and learning environments for learner success.

### Goal 1:

Embed ceremony, language, and culture into all aspects of the college environment.

### Goal 2:

Complete, on a regular basis, service level reviews with Indigenous students, faculty, and staff to ensure supports and services increasingly meet their holistic needs.

### Goal 3:

Create culturally safe and culturally responsive campuses.



The specific actions that enable the implementation of our goals are documented and continually updated in our Indigenization Operational Action Plan.

## Relationship Building and Self-Determination

NIC will build relationships and be accountable to Indigenous communities in support of self-determination through education, training, and applied research.

### Goal 1:

Create opportunities to meet with Nations and Indigenous people informally and in community to foster meaningful relationships, dialogues, and commitments to action.

### Goal 2:

Develop partnerships with Nations and Indigenous organizations via formal agreements and a structured approach to consultation and engagement as identified by the Nation or organization.

### Goal 3:

Continue to partner with Indigenous communities to develop accredited decolonized post-secondary programs that can be delivered in communities and on campus.

### Goal 4:

Develop a strategy to support Indigenous communities with program exploration, proposal preparation, and securing funding to develop and deliver self-determined programs.

# Thank You

Gilakas'la  
*Kwak'wala*

ḡilakasla  
*Liqwala*

klecko  
*Nuu-chah-nulth*

ʔimot ʔotʰ kʷonome  
*ʔayʔuthəm - Salish*

Awi'nakola.  
We are one with the land and the sea.

North Island College gives special thanks to the people who have helped develop this plan and individuals who have forged the way forward in Indigenous Education at each of our campuses. We also recognize the people, past and present, who have worked tirelessly to enhance and revitalize Indigenous Education in our communities, and across British Columbia and Canada.

We must remember the people upon whose shoulders we stand. Those individuals, Nations, and organizations worked tenaciously for decades to change federal, provincial, and local policies to better serve Indigenous people and challenge the status quo. We recognize all Indigenous leaders and educators of the past, who faced extreme adversity, yet persevered and made changes that continue to support Indigenous learners today.

NIC raises its hands to those who have helped us in service of Indigenous Education at North Island College and those who have contributed to this plan. We thank the Knowledge Holders, including the NIC Elders in Residence: Fernanda Paré, Evelyn Voyageur, June Johnson, Maggie Sedgemore, Jane Jones, and Daryle Mills, who share their grounded and spiritual wisdom, which is foundational to this work.

Our sincere gratitude to the Indigenous Education Council\* who guide and ensure delivery of education and support services relevant to the needs of Indigenous people and ensure the college works with Indigenous people in culturally appropriate ways. We thank them for their time and commitment, not only in the development of this plan, but in all of the work they do for NIC. Thanks to the Indigenous Education Navigators for their contributions and support of Indigenous students, as well as staff, faculty, administration, and leadership, who were willing participants in the engagement sessions for this plan. Most importantly, we thank NIC students who are at the heart of all we do at NIC. Their voices, experiences, stories, and suggestions will guide us to walk forward in a good way. We respectfully extend our gratitude to everyone who contributed their ideas, knowledge, wisdom, and visions during the development of this plan.

**We acknowledge and thank all of you and pledge our commitment to continue to learn, grow, and be strong allies for the work ahead of us. NIC is committed to learning, growing, and working together, to make the space for great things to come.**

\* For more information about the Indigenous Education Council, comprised of members from the 35 Nations in 3 regions whom NIC serves, please visit <https://www.nic.bc.ca/about-us/the-nic-commitment/indigenous-education-council>

**PUBLICATION AUTHORED BY**

**Kelly Shopland**

Executive Director, Indigenous Education, North Island College  
K'ómoks First Nation

**ᑕᑦᑲᑦᑲᑦᑲᑦᑲᑦ - Sara Child**

Indigenous Education Facilitator, North Island College  
Kwagu't First Nation

**Xa'nusamega - Gigame Walas Kwakiutl - Charlene Everson**

Independent Indigenous Consultant  
K'ómoks First Nation

**PUBLICATION DESIGN BY**

**Claire Guiot**

Owner, Red Bird Creative  
Faculty, DIGITAL Design + Development, North Island College

**Keisha Moore**

Graduate, DIGITAL Design + Development, North Island College



The background is a solid red color with a pattern of large, overlapping, semi-transparent organic shapes in a slightly darker shade of red. These shapes resemble stylized leaves or flowing liquid forms, creating a sense of movement and depth.

WORKING TOGETHER 2026

MAKING SPACE  
FOR THE  
GREAT THINGS  
TO COME