



## **Indigenizing Our Academy: Strategic Planning Indigenous Post-Secondary Education at UFV**

### **University College of the Fraser Valley (UFV)**

This document is being widely circulated in order to generate an open discussion on the development and improvement of Indigenous Post-Secondary Education Programs and Services with the University College of the Fraser Valley. It is available on the UFV Aboriginal Access Services website at [www.UFV.ca/arc/indigenizing.htm](http://www.UFV.ca/arc/indigenizing.htm)

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**Deadline for submissions: April 15, 2007**

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## Preface

This document, developed in collaboration between the Aboriginal Community Council and UFV's Aboriginal Access Services, is being circulated to generate an open discussion on the development and improvement of Indigenous Post-Secondary Education Programs and Services with the University College of the Fraser Valley. It is hoped that by reviewing this Working Document and providing feedback and suggestions for changes, Band governments, Indigenous organizations and community people, including current and former indigenous students, will have an opportunity to ensure that Indigenous programs, services and research initiatives are relevant, respectful and useful to the communities they hope to serve. This paper invites Elders, leaders, educators, and individuals to provide their ideas, criticisms and recommendations to the working committee through the use of this document.

To assist in this process the following questions and discussion points are provided.

- Post-secondary education refers to many opportunities beyond high school including, apprenticeship programs, trades training, technical school, college, and university. Is post-secondary education a part of your children's future?
- Will getting a post-secondary education improve the opportunities for work and development in our communities for our people? Are there examples of this?
- Can post-secondary education be improved? In what ways?
- Do UFV programs prepare students in a good way?
- Does UFV offer the kinds of programs that are helpful in building our communities?

Aboriginal Access Services and the Aboriginal Community Council look forward to the input, response, and direction that come from each community. This is an earnest attempt to ensure that post – secondary education in the UFV catchment of Sto:lo, Nlaka'pamux, and the In-SHUCK-ch territory reflects and includes the voice and vision of indigenous people in the planning, implementation and governance of programs, services and research at UFV.

# Indigenizing Our Academy: Strategic Planning Indigenous<sup>1</sup> Post-Secondary Education at UFV

## Introduction

In September of 2005, Aboriginal Access Services received Aboriginal Special Projects Funding from the Ministry of Advanced Education – Aboriginal Branch to work on the project Indigenizing our Academy to strategically plan post-secondary education for Indigenous communities in traditional Sto:lo, Nlaka’pamux and the In-SHUCK-ch territory.

To begin the project, Mark Point was hired in October, 2005 to consult with the Indigenous communities within the UFV catchment. Specifically he was talking to people about developing an Indigenous Studies department, enhancing Indigenous research capacity, boosting Indigenous enrolment and improving retention and success of Indigenous learners at UFV. In September of 2006 he submitted a four page report containing his findings to UFV’s Aboriginal Community Council. Subsequent to his work and more importantly, upon the recommendations stemming from Mr. Point’s findings, UFV Aboriginal Access Services, has worked closely with the Aboriginal Community Council Sub-Committee to develop plans and make recommendations for post-secondary education at and with the University College of the Fraser Valley.

The resulting Working Document is an integral part of this continuation. It is being circulated, as widely as possible, to Indigenous leaders, Elders, community education staff and to Indigenous educators to invite open discussion on the development and improvement of Indigenous Post-Secondary Education Programs and Services with the University College of the Fraser Valley. This paper invites Indigenous Elders, leaders, educators, and individuals to provide their ideas, criticisms and recommendations to the working committee through the use of this document. Comments and feedback can be sent to Shirley.Hardman@UFV.ca prior to April 15, 2007.

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<sup>1</sup> The term indigenous has been used throughout this document and has replaced the term aboriginal except in cases where it is used in a name like Aboriginal Community Council and Aboriginal Access services. The term aboriginal has also been retained in the self-identification section of this document.

## Background

UFV has a lengthy history of affiliation with local Indigenous communities. The partnerships have varied in longevity and capacity. UFV has delivered curriculum in Indigenous communities; Elders and Sto:lo Nation staff have worked with UFV faculty to develop curriculum; and, through the recommendations of the Aboriginal Community Council UFV opened S'olh Shxwleli (Our Places) on the Chilliwack and Abbotsford campuses. However, post-secondary education has remained somewhat elusive for Indigenous peoples living in traditional Sto:lo territory. UFV is the neighborhood post secondary school to nearly 7% of Indigenous peoples in BC, yet only 2.5% of the UFV population self-identify as Aboriginal (Holmes, 2006, p. 62) and anecdotally, it is projected that fewer still complete degrees, diplomas and certificates. Yet, Indigenous leaders, parents, learners and potential learners insist that education is both what is wanted and needed to build capacity within Indigenous communities.

### ***Past projects***

UFV's lengthy history of partnering and delivering programs and services in Indigenous communities can be captured by highlighting a few of these initiatives. By understanding what has taken place, we can perhaps identify some "promising practices". Understanding what has worked and what can be improved will assist us to collaboratively undertake new projects and practices.

***Toti:lthet Centre:*** Officially in 1992 the Coqualeetza Centre and the University College of the Fraser Valley signed an affiliation agreement to promote post-secondary educational opportunities for First Nations' people within Sto:lo territories and beyond. At that time Coqualeetza Cultural Centre, representing the twenty four bands of the Sto:lo people, was incorporated under the Societies Act of British Columbia, possessed a B.C. private trade school license, and operated a community learning centre for First Nations' people, the Toti:lthet Centre.

***Sai'kuz Substance Abuse Counseling Certificate program:*** The Carrier Sekani partnered with UFV in 1999 to address that community's endeavor to stop the cycle of substance abuse. Delivering a program in Vanderhoof at the Potlatch House on the Sai'kuz (Stoney Creek) Reserve, UFV adapted the curriculum of its Substance Abuse Counseling Certificate program to meet the needs of the students within the community. UFV instructors traveled to Vanderhoof to deliver the program. The success of this program was most evident in the reciprocal learning. Faculty carried away lessons that can not be found in texts and the community benefited by training their own people to offer substance abuse counseling creating grassroots, native-run treatment options that respect First Nations traditions.

***Chehalis Substance Abuse Counseling Certificate program:*** The Substance Abuse Counseling program was again delivered in 2004, this time to the Sto:lo community of Chehalis. The partnership this time included the delivery of a course specifically designed by staff from the Youth Treatment Centre, Lawathet Lalem, in the Chehalis community, operated by the local Chehalis people. As well UFV's Traditional Ways of Helping and Healing (FNST 102) was also included. The Chehalis program also incorporated classes in reading, writing and critical thinking, that proved to be useful for bridging students from their work and non-academic backgrounds to university study.

***Lalems Ye Siyolexwe (House of Elders):*** The Social Services and Social Work department (now the School of Social Work) at UFV clearly demonstrated the commitment of UFV to developing programs and curriculum which reflect Sto:lo values and experiences in signing a Letter of Understanding with the Sto:lo Lalems Ye Siyolexwe (House of Elders). The Social Services & Social Work Department at UFV committed to developing a diploma program "that would reflect Sto:lo values and experiences". In order to achieve this goal UFV partnered with the Lalems Ye Siyolexwe (House of Elders) to not only consult with and work collaboratively with but more importantly to acknowledge the Elders as the "principal source of knowledge about health and social needs of the Sto:lo people".

Subsequently, UFV, through Aboriginal Access Services and the Institute of Modern Languages again partnered with Sto:lo Shxweli, and the Lalems Ye Selyolewx to develop eight Halq'emeylem courses (25 credits) leading to a Language Proficiency Certificate, Culture and Language diploma, a Bachelor degree, or the Developmental Standard Term Certificate. At the same time, UFV sought to acknowledge, in a meaningful way, the Halq'emeylem language work that has been on-going in the community through the Sto:lo Shxweli and Coqualeetza Cultural Centre. Halq'emeylem language graduates from these programs are eligible to enter a process to receive university transfer credit from UFV for their Halq'emeylem knowledge.

***Seabird Island Band:*** Seabird Island Band (SIB) with their strong commitment to education and their own resources partnered with UFV to deliver Early Childhood Education Certificates, ECE specialty certificates and Family Childcare certificates. The programs delivered have been uniquely designed to meet the needs of SIB students. Joint governance and delivery has allowed SIB to hire their own support staff as well as instructors to deliver upgrading and tutoring, while UFV faculty has traveled to the community to deliver course content and office hours.

***Shxwha:y Village:*** Shxwha:y Village approached Aboriginal Access Services at UFV in the fall of 2004 to express their concerns about the lack of transportation amongst potential students. Further dialogue resulted in an Affiliation agreement between the Shxwha:y Village and UFV to "provide education and training opportunities designed to meet the needs of Aboriginal learners" to mutually benefit Shxwha:y and neighboring communities

and UFV while ultimately assisting Shxw̓ha:y and other Aboriginal learners to achieve their individual training and education goals.

***Fraser-Cascade School District #78:*** The most recent partnership struck between UFV and the Indigenous community is one which will see the development of twenty curriculum packages for the Fraser-Cascade school district #78. This partnership brings together teachers, administrators, community cultural resource people, the UFV Teacher Education program, Aboriginal Access Services and recent Development Standard Term Certificate (Halq'emeylem Language Teacher) graduates to work collaboratively to develop relevant, respectful Indigenous curriculum for grades k-10.

In summary, these projects provide only a snapshot of the collaboration between local Indigenous communities and UFV. What the partnerships clearly demonstrate is the heartfelt commitment by Indigenous peoples to promote education in our communities. Equally evident is UFV's willingness to accept the challenges inherent in Indigenous post-secondary education. There is undoubtedly a collective commitment made by local Indigenous leaders and the institution to share vision, policy, action and governance for Indigenous post-secondary education that meet the needs of both the individuals and the diversity of the Indigenous communities.

What has hindered the communities and UFV has been the allocation of human resources and at times monetary resources necessary to accomplish these tasks. Efforts to meet the post-secondary education needs of Indigenous communities has largely depended on the success of acquiring sparse Indigenous funding through proposals or more often it has been accomplished by ardent staff and individuals working independently for the betterment of our people.

### ***UFV Courses with Indigenous content***

- ADED 330x: Special Topics: Histories of Aboriginal Adult Education
- ANTH 111: First Nations in British Columbia—Traditional Cultures
- ANTH 112: Aboriginal Peoples in B.C.: Contemporary Issues
- CMNS 099: Introduction to Written Communications
- CRIM 211: Indigenous Peoples, Crime and Criminal Justice
- EDUC 275: Contemporary Issues and Policies in Aboriginal Education
- EDUC 290: Introduction to Aboriginal Culture and Language Education
- EDUC 291: Intermediate Studies in Aboriginal Culture and Language Education
- EDUC 447: Indigenous Youth and Schooling
- ENGL 170x: Literature in Context: Aboriginal Cultures
- FNST 101: Stó:lō Nation Development
- FNST 102: Stó:lō Traditional Ways of Healing and Helping
- FNST 201: Stó:lō Communications and World View

FNST 202:	Stó:lō Social Structure
FNST 230:	ACLS Praticum
GEOG 447:	Aboriginal Geography
HALQ 101:	Halq'eméylem Language I
HALQ 102:	Halq'eméylem Language II
HALQ 201:	Intermediate Halq'eméylem I
HALQ 202:	Intermediate Halq'eméylem II
HALQ 210:	Advanced Halq'eméylem I: Translation Skills
HALQ 215:	Advanced Halq'eméylem II: Transcription and Orthography Development
HALQ 220:	Advanced Halq'eméylem III: Composition and Story-Telling
HALQ 310:	Advanced Halq'eméylem IV: Curriculum Development and Teaching Methodologies
HIST 103:	Stó:lō History
HIST 226:	Native and Newcomer Relations in Canada
HIST 326:	The History of Native Peoples in Canada
HIST 426:	Indigenous Peoples and Warfare in Canada: Pre-contact to the Present
HIST 458:	History of Indigenous Peoples in Latin America
SCMS 387:	Canadian Native Peoples
SCMS 388:	Minority Indigenous Peoples of the World
SOWK 392:	First Nations Social Work

32 courses have Indigenous content; however, only 17 of these courses have been developed in cooperation with and/or under the advisement of the Indigenous community. The seventeen are the newest developed courses, including Halq'eméylem (HALQ), First Nation Studies (FNST), Stó:lō History (HIST 103), and the Education (EDUC) courses developed for the new Aboriginal Culture and Language Support diploma. This demonstrates a shift in the way that the University College of the Fraser Valley is cooperating and collaborating with Indigenous communities.

Métis programs and content are glaringly missing from the UFV initiatives. There has been no focus on Métis curriculum development and no development of programs to meet the unique needs of the Métis communities in this geographical area. Despite this, the Métis people and organizations remain hopeful that UFV will address the gaps in the curriculum and Métis organizations have continued to provide a presence and voice at the Aboriginal Community Council.

## The Aboriginal Community Council

The Aboriginal Community Council (Council) membership draws a cross-section of knowledgeable and experienced representatives from Indigenous Bands, schools, organizations and public school districts. The Council was formed in 1995 at the invitation of UFV to provide advice, recommendations and guidance to enhance the participation and success of Indigenous learners attending UFV.

Over the years the Council has grown and in many ways gained momentum and strength through its quarterly meetings. Initially, in some instances, the Council was criticized as being “merely a sounding board” and not really providing voice to the needs of Indigenous learners and communities. More recently however, the Council has been instrumental in guiding and prioritizing the development of UFV’s proposals for Aboriginal Special Projects Funding, the Indian Studies Support Program, the Canada Research Chair and other relevant calls for proposals.

This proactive participation of the Council has resulted in a number of new initiatives as well as shifted UFV’s collaborative process in the development of new Indigenous curriculum, programs and projects. In turn this has resulted in a review of the Terms of Reference (ToR) that guide the Council.

## Indigenizing Our Academy

*“indigenizing the academy means to make the academy both responsive and responsible to the Indigenous peoples’ goals of self-determination and well-being.”*

Indigenizing is a concept that originates in grass roots efforts to change the colonial/assimilative processes that have influenced and shaped the lives and beliefs of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people living in countries like Canada. More often than not education systems, in an imperialistic way, have placed western ways of knowing and teaching over other (e.g. Aboriginal/Indigenous) knowledge bases and values. It has been suggested that when educational institutions incorporate local Indigenous values and principals into their curriculums and policies there will be a recognizable shift away from and perhaps an extinguishment of the cognitive imperialism that currently pervades modern society and our education systems.

In October 2005 under the guidance of the Aboriginal Community Council, Mark Point was hired to conduct research within UFV and local Indigenous communities to provide input in four areas of interest: the development of an Indigenous Studies department at UFV; enhancement of Indigenous research capacity; increasing the enrolment of Indigenous learners at UFV; and improving the success experienced by these learners. This research proved to only scratch the surface of what is needed to engage in this work. The four page report submitted by Mark Point in September 2006 made the following recommendations:

1. That a major strategy for communicating with Indigenous communities and individual households be developed and implemented.
2. That a special effort be undertaken to bring together the leaders of the Indigenous groups to explore and receive direction on the role of Indigenous education within the University College structure.
3. That UFV work to “build capacity” within Indigenous communities by delivering programs in the Indigenous communities.
4. That local institutions that offer Adult Basic Education agree on a common curriculum so that outcomes, and therefore entrance to UFV, will be similar for all students, regardless of where individuals study.
5. That an ad-hoc committee be mandated to make recommendations to the UFV Board of Governors.

Mr. Point also observed within his report that local Indigenous scholars should also be sought out and asked for their input into the strategic planning of Indigenous programs and services at UFV. Further the report also suggested that it was pertinent to review the

practices of other sectors in Indigenizing and to share these with a view to not re-inventing the wheel. And finally, it was pointed out that it is critical that Indigenous community leaders must approve of this project, not only in intent but in process. Mr. Point concluded with a caution that Indigenizing Our Academy will take a concerted effort from steadfast committed Indigenous community representatives and equally committed UFV faculty, staff and administrators.

UFV is listening, and with the guidance of the Aboriginal Community Council proposes to form a partnership to effectively address the needs and deliver post secondary programs and services that respect and include an Indigenous worldview. Such a partnership requires respectful on-going dialogue that seeks to include the diversity of Indigenous voices in the UFV catchment. One way to begin this dialogue is through the distribution of this Working Document. This paper invites Indigenous Elders, leaders, educators, and individuals to provide their ideas, criticisms and recommendations to the working committee through the use of this document.

### ***January 4 & 5, 2007 Meeting***

On January 4 and 5, 2007, a sub-committee of the Aboriginal Community Council met to strategically plan the development of Indigenizing Our Academy. The committee, made up of Aboriginal Community Council members, identified where we have been, where we want to be and recommended ways to get there. The dialogue in this planning session has been captured in eloquent truths and recommendations that were put forward.

***Where we have been*** is complicated and tells a story of the way things used to be and covers the time up until we met on January 4, 2007. Post secondary education has not always been attainable for Indigenous people. It was acknowledged that it has been felt that to be educated many of our people had to “give up a part of ourselves” and that education was viewed as assimilative. Also, k-12 education has rarely prepared Indigenous students for further study. More often than not, Indigenous learners coming to UFV start with College and Career Prep programs to upgrade reading and writing skills that should have been developed in high school. And too, once accepted, students struggle to balance the commitments of home, culture and the university-college. In the past two decades, (and it was suggested since its inception in 1974) UFV has worked diligently to make changes, to encourage and make accessible its programs and services to Indigenous learners. The projects and courses that have been developed are a reasonable start.

Over the course of the two days, the group developed a vision for Indigenous education at UFV. The vision is one that decidedly points to ***where we want to be***. We want post-secondary education to be “meaningful and useful” to our people and we “want our people to want post-secondary education”. We want indigenous people to “feel a sense of belonging and acceptance—to feel safe” while they pursue higher education. We need to

“have an awareness about the opportunities available” to us. We “need more UFV information in our communities”. The curriculum “should” cover our worldview, it should “reflect the indigenous people”. We “need more First Nation teachers” and would like, “to increase the number of First Nation students attending post-secondary” institutes. We “need more Trades training”. We “need to bring courses to the community—it’s been done but it needs more”. We “require active engagement from our communities”. We should be “building on what people learn”. It is “not only about what we teach but how we teach” that is important. We want “sessional and faculty as well as involvement at the administrative level”. It is necessary to “have that vehicle to get information back and forth going both ways between the provincial and national levels”. There needs to be “awareness amongst faculty and staff—we need more inclusion for accurate education”. There must be balance in education: education and culture. “We want an Indigenous Studies Department”. “It has to come from us”, “it is about ownership”. We acknowledge that it “requires a long commitment” and that “we have real heart commitment”. “The whole community needs to be involved. Elders need to be involved—we have to work collectively within our communities on this”.

The group, working over the course of the two days, came away with a vision of a physical space and a framework for inclusion of Indigenous Studies at UFV. The physical space will be one that is big enough to accommodate the growth expected in Indigenous studies. It will provide a home for both Indigenous programs and the services needed for current and potential Indigenous learners. It will provide office space for student services staff, for faculty and sessional faculty, a gathering space, meeting rooms, a computer lab, resource library, kitchen and cultural space. It is clear that the building(s) should be culturally defined, should build on the strengths of what currently exists at UFV, and should incorporate approaches that have proved successful in other areas and other institutions. The physical space, programs and services will be led by an Indigenous administrator with the authority to oversee Indigenous Directors of Programs and Services and to report directly within the Senior Administrative Group at UFV. In addition, all of the work and development will be accomplished through an equitable partnership with UFV and the Aboriginal Community Council for the identification and prioritization of needs as put forward by Indigenous people and communities.

### ***UFV Goals for Indigenizing***

Working in collaboration and in close partnership with Indigenous communities, their leaders, and academic partners in the Fraser-Cascade, Abbotsford, Chilliwack and Mission School Districts, UFV will strive to be both responsive and responsible to the Indigenous peoples’ goals of self-determination and well-being. Through the development of Goals and Actions UFV aims to become a place of learning that recognizes, respects and includes an indigenous worldview in all aspects of its day to day activities.

## Value-based Planning

Cultural expressions, values, *ways* of seeing the world, and the ways we get things done, are grounded in our experiences and in what has been taught to us and accepted “as the way things are done”. More often than not Indigenous values and ways of doing things are markedly different than those held by mainstream society and specifically administrators of social programs and services, including education. Of critical importance is that partnerships and shared governance in Indigenous post – secondary programs and services be guided and informed by Indigenous values and guiding principles.

It is our Indigenous values that have contributed to and bolstered our survival (and our ability to thrive) as peoples and nations. Most often they are values that have been passed to us through story telling and teachings from our Elders and relatives. For example, we teach our children the value of thinking of others before we think about ourselves, to accept what life brings and that some things cannot be rushed and ask for our patience. And, these values, while they continue to guide us, influence our behaviors, and continue to be passed to our children and reinforced in our day to day living, they are not easily accessible nor necessarily understood and embraced by our non-native counterparts. Nevertheless it is the Indigenous values that must be at the forefront of planning Indigenous programs and services at UFV.

### **Core Values**

Achieving balance and harmony within and in our external relations is at the centre of the values we embrace. Indigenous values can be characterized as holistic and in many instances are interconnected. Values serve to clarify and resolve issues, help determine direction and build community. By identifying such values we are in a position to overcome value differences that cause confusion, resistance or discomfort among participants. The values listed here cannot be interpreted as exhaustive nor necessarily universal but rather may serve as a check and balance mechanism in the planning process.

- **Respect**  
There is respect for unique and personal differences, avoiding opinions and judgments; there is respect for the rights of an individual, for others and for ourselves. Humility/humbleness is an important aspect of respect, as is careful listening and observing. Respect, for Elders and the wisdom that comes from their lived experiences, is paramount. Respect is closely linked to all other values.
  
- **Balance**  
Mind, Body & Spirit

- **Interconnectedness of All Things (Land, Family, Community)**  
 All things have a spirit-like we do as people (trees, mountains, rocks, fish, animals, all things). We live in balance with nature as opposed to controlling nature. The needs of the group are greater than the needs of the individual. Cooperation as opposed to competition leads to consensus-building. It is understood that many things remain unknown or not known.
- **Continuity of Life (Circle of Life)**  
 We are connected to the past and to the future. What we do today affects the generations to come. What we do today honors the ones who came before. The world operates in fours and in cycles. (Life and death are a part of that)
- **Personal and Cultural Identity**  
 Knowing who we are and where we come from. Knowing that we are a reflection of our family and our community. Our language holds our culture. Language contains cultural expressions that are not easily translatable.
- **Each Person Carries a Gift**  
 Every person has a unique and special gift that is theirs alone. We accept the gift that is ours with humbleness. It is our responsibility to carry our gifts in a good way.
- **Patience**  
 All things unfold in time. Things happen when they are meant to happen. It demonstrates respect for individuals and is instrumental in consensus building and provides time for second thoughts.
- **Taking Care of Others**  
 We cannot live without others. Others make us who we are and help us to be what we were meant to be. It is a process of giving back that sustains us. Sharing. Generosity. Wealth belongs to the one who gives the most.
- **Living Carefully**  
 What we do comes back to us. Doing something good comes back seven fold, doing something bad comes back ten fold.
- **Spiritual Life**  
 Integrated into every aspect, it is a natural component of everything. Sacred. When you take from a place, remember to give something in thanks. Ask for guidance, express gratefulness for what we are given. Appreciate mystery—not all things need to be explained/known.
- **Enjoyment of Life**  
 Humour (smile=good medicine), health, feast, sharing. Live everyday with a good mind and a good heart.

Reflecting and incorporating the Core Values and or elements of these values in the strategic planning process provides an integrity to Indigenizing Our Academy that otherwise could not be obtained. Therefore, the following section outlines in eight numbered sectors the proposed goals, actions to achieve these goals, and provides rationale for why the goal is appropriate. Each of the eight goals is prefaced with one or more Core Values.

## **Continuity of Life (Circle of Life)**

### **Goal # 1:**

To provide assistance, resources, and opportunities to increase Indigenous community capacity and prepare Indigenous learners to live well in the diverse society that surrounds them.

### **ACTION:**

- To respond to the needs of the Indigenous communities as they are identified by the Indigenous communities.
- Increased number of Indigenous learners attending post-secondary institutes

### **Rationale:**

Indigenous communities are developing economically, socially and delivering more and more services to their own communities. Examples can be seen in community dental clinics, daycares, health units, gas bars, assisted living complexes, healing centres, and tourist destinations to name only a few. Goals of self-determination and the anticipation of successful treaty negotiations serve to increase the demands for Indigenous people to be adequately prepared educationally to fill jobs and manage businesses and resources.

## **Balance: Mind, Body, & Spirit**

### **Goal # 2:**

That UFV, through the governance of the Aboriginal Community Council, will be responsive to and in partnership with community leadership develop programs and services that meet the needs of Indigenous communities, their initiatives, and their goals of sustainability, self-determination and well-being.

### **ACTION:**

- Assist each community with the development of Education Plans which involve UFV in implementation of programs and services.

### **Rationale:**

Because of historical negative school experiences and the low levels of education existing among many Indigenous people it is important to change the way that education is viewed

by Indigenous people. As the programs and services are transformed to ones that are Indigenous centered and community driven it is critical that Indigenous communities encourage attendance and strive to support learners as they embark on their educational journey. It is equally important that Indigenous people come to view education, and specifically post-secondary education and training, as a natural part of Indigenous life.

## **Each Person Carries a Gift & Taking Care of Others**

### **Goal # 3:**

To provide access and on-going support to Indigenous students coming from the k-12 system and/or students coming into post-secondary education after an absence from education.

### **ACTION:**

- Develop a series of courses and/or services, targeting Grade 12 graduates and mature students requiring academic, community, and/or financial assistance to enhance their academic experiences at UFV.
- Provide learning experiences/course/programs in the Indigenous communities as requested

### **Rationale:**

Because of the rationales for Goals 1 & 2 increasing access to post-secondary education requires concentrated efforts. Programs, specifically developed to meet the needs and provide the necessary supports should be delivered both on-campus and in communities. Such programs will necessarily come from an Indigenous worldview and will provide the academic supports needed to prepare students for study in the program of his/her choice.

## **Respect & Balance**

### **Goal # 4:**

To create a culturally safe educational environment and foster a sense of belonging for Indigenous learners.

### **ACTION:**

- Build a Lalem (house) for Indigenous studies, students and community.
- Provide Elder-in-Residence services that supports active participation of Elders in program and curricular development, decision making, and student support services
- Provide professional development opportunities for faculty, staff and administrators annually
- New staff orientation packages include a “Welcome to Sto:lo territory”

- Updates of the Indigenizing initiative once per semester for every Department at the department meeting
- Core course requirements for all students in all diploma and degree programs across the disciplines
- Increase the presence of Indigenous staff, faculty and administrators.
- Provide prominent venues for permanent and rotational Indigenous themed displays on all campuses
- Increase resources available to students. Realize marked growth in the resource libraries books, videos, archives taking an active role in providing access to Indigenous content resources.

**Rationale:**

The historical processes and the lived reality of Indigenous people in Canada is still a mystery to many people living in Canada. With few exceptions curriculum in public schools has ignored Indigenous history and pre-history. For the most part Indigenous history has been relegated to the myth of the wide open spaces that was Canada, a brief acknowledgement of residential schools and finally points to the social problems that exist today. The diversity that exists within Indigenous communities, the urban Indigenous and the Métis populations and multiple sectors within these (e.g. youth, women, elders, socio-economic and cultural) is misunderstood or ignored in one size fits all approaches.

In November 2000 UFV opened S’olh Shxwlèlí (the Aboriginal Resource Centre) that provides students a space to gather, study, relax between classes, and contains a kitchen area, computer lab and spiritual altar. There is also a smaller space on Abbotsford campus that provides access to similar services. What has been learned by staff, students and the community is that by providing a culturally defined gathering space, offices and meeting rooms we are not only fostering a sense of community and belonging for Indigenous people; we are able to provide valuable educational opportunities for non-Indigenous students, staff and faculty. As we Indigenize it is critical that we begin with a physical space that will not only accommodate Indigenous learners, staff, faculty and community but that will provide context and visibility to the larger community.

UFV staff, faculty and administrators are duty bound to develop an understanding and appreciation for the diverse histories and realities of Indigenous peoples, specifically within Sto:lo territories. Additionally, this understanding should be demonstrated in their approach to students in all that we do at UFV.

Likewise, every student attending UFV should, upon completion of his/her diploma or degree, recognize and understand the historical processes and indigenous reality of the traditional territory in which they are learning.

Indigenous students are strengthened by the presence of role models and will benefit from opportunities to be mentored by Indigenous staff, faculty and Elders. Additionally, it is, in many instances, critical that Indigenous courses and programs be delivered by Indigenous people.

Creating a sense of belonging in an environment that reflects Indigenous peoples, their worldviews, and what is valued requires the visibility of markers that are easily identifiable as originating from the traditional territories that UFV lies within.

## **Personal and Cultural Identity & Continuity of Life**

### **Goal # 5:**

To monitor, in meaningful ways, the achievement of self-identified aboriginal<sup>2</sup> learners.

### **ACTION:**

- To create an atmosphere of inclusion that promotes the desire for Aboriginal learners to self identify.
- To quantify the access, retention and completion rates of self-identified Aboriginal learners, annually.
- Report annually the areas of study (by program) of self-identified Aboriginal learners.

### **Rationale:**

Quantifying program and student success is dependent on having accurate information about students. However, for numerous reasons many of which remain unknown, it is recognized that Indigenous students are reluctant to self-identify as Aboriginal. One example provided by the Aboriginal Access Coordinator in November 2005, illustrated that only one in five Indigenous students had self identified. The five students all worked for or Aboriginal Access Services in some capacity. What was more startling was that when asked to self-identify, only one of the four students then self-identified.

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<sup>2</sup> While all other references to Aboriginal learners has been changed to Indigenous learners, in this section the term Aboriginal is used to reflect the term currently being used in the self-identification of students in the province. It is also the term that is being used in the k-12 school system for self-identification.

## **Respect & Taking Care of Others**

### **Goal # 6:**

Shared program governance, ensuring Indigenous voice and vision guides the work.

### **ACTION:**

- Development of a partnership agreement
- Process of governance and policy process that flows direct between the Board of Governors to the Aboriginal Community Council
- Advocacy training (capacity building) for Aboriginal Community Council members

### **Rationale:**

Rarely have educational institutions alone been able to adequately meet the needs of Indigenous learners and the communities from which they come. Recognizing this, UFV, has a lengthy history of affiliation with local Indigenous communities. The partnerships have varied in longevity and capacity. UFV has delivered curriculum in Indigenous communities; Elders and Sto:lo Nation staff have worked with UFV faculty to develop curriculum; and perhaps most notable in UFV's commitment to working with and for Indigenous communities is that the first UFV Board of Governors included four Indigenous representatives. UFV and Indigenous communities have worked together since UFV's inception and this most recent initiative is a formalization of this partnership.

Integral to shared governance is a comprehensive agreement on how to work together. Clearly, the communities need an understanding of what UFV can offer and UFV must develop an understanding of what the community needs. This formal partnership will address ways to share visions, goals and action that is strategic and grounded in policy and processes that will serve both partners, drawing on the strengths, wisdoms and experiences of each partner.

## **Living Carefully & Enjoyment of Life & Patience**

### **Goal # 7:**

To increase Indigenous content in programs and to develop programs, services, and research initiatives that are directly responsive to Indigenizing our Academy.

### **ACTION:**

- Establish a Department of Indigenous Studies department
- Create an Indigenous/First nation Teacher Education program
- Develop curriculum/courses that reflect indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing across all disciplines/programs
- Develop a core program of courses for Indigenous students across the disciplines

- Offer degree studies with a Minor / Major in Indigenous Studies
- Develop and implement protocol agreements for Indigenous research initiatives that are mindful and respectful of Indigenous teachings and that protect Indigenous knowledges.

**Rationale:**

The efforts, the voices and the collective vision of everyone involved points to an Indigenized post-secondary learning environment that is responsive to and supportive of the Indigenous communities’ efforts and goals towards self-determination and well-being. Students, community members, Indigenous staff and academics have insisted that in order to increase Indigenous community capacity and sustainability it is critical that post-secondary institutions support the principles and take a lead role in shifting public perceptions and understanding of Indigenous knowledges, histories, and realities. There is strong voice and support and demand for UFV to move forward in this work.

**Interconnectedness of All Things (Land, Family and Community)**

**Goal # 8:**

To have Indigenous communities view UFV as the first choice for their learners in post-secondary education.

**ACTION:**

- Newsletters circulated through each Aboriginal Community Council meeting
- Bulletins at least four times a year (between ACC meetings)
- Web page information to be updated weekly
- Aboriginal Access staff attendance at Career Fairs and Community events
- With state of the art displays and knowledgeable staff

**Rationale:**

Many Indigenous people have not considered the possibilities of gaining a post-secondary education. Nor do they have an awareness of the kinds of educational options that are available to them. UFV must develop culturally appropriate and relevant recruitment strategies that reach into communities and provide accurate and timely information about UFV opportunities. As UFV grows, indigenizes and develops culturally relevant and responsive curriculum and programs it is essential that Indigenous communities are informed and aware of the ways that the programs and services can meet the needs of their learners.

# *Lalems Ye Mestíyexw*

## House of the Peoples

### **Vision Statement**

An indigenized post-secondary learning environment that promotes Indigenous peoples' goals for self-determination and well-being.

### **Mission Statement**

To provide culturally relevant Indigenous programs, research initiatives and services that meet the diverse yet unique needs of Indigenous people and communities within a post-secondary academic setting that is both reflective and inclusive of Indigenous ways of knowing, teaching, and learning.