



Embracing Elders and Knowledge Keepers: Beyond the Welcome Faculty/Instructor Resource Guide 2023

Project:

Embracing Elders and Knowledge Keepers: Beyond the Welcome

Acknowledgments: The Teaching and Learning Centre acknowledges the contributions of Stó:lō community members, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, TLC Specialists, UFV members, and the Office of AVP Indigenous in the development of this resource guide.

Type of Opportunity:

Classroom participation – students, staff, and faculty

Program Description:

Embracing Elders and Knowledge Keepers: Beyond the Welcome is to support UFV faculty, staff, and students who are interested in engaging Elders and Knowledge Keepers in their classrooms and or special events related to courses that occur both on and off the four UFV campus locations. This is a “living” guide that will continue to be updated based on wisdom from Stó:lō Elders.

Definition of Elders and Knowledge Keepers:

An Elder or Knowledge Keeper is a person who is recognized within their community or nation to have developed gifts of sharing traditional teachings of Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing.

Indigenous Student Centre Elder Supports:

The Indigenous Student Centre (ISC) has identified Elders and Knowledge Keepers that have shared their willingness to support UFV: <https://www.ufv.ca/isc/elder-services/>

Roles of Elder who supports Faculty:

- Provide an opening and welcome to a meeting or special event
- Provide protocol for traditional cultural teachings
- In-class sharing of Indigenous worldviews, wisdom, and teachings around decolonization, Indigenization, and reconciliation.
- May also assist with workshops, field experiences, program gatherings, and on-campus events for faculty, students, or staff.
- In-class sharing of land-based teachings, ceremonial practices
- Promote and support the preservation and use of local Indigenous languages: Halq'emeylem
- Attend classes to provide knowledge on their area of expertise and more

Roles of Knowledge Keeper who supports Faculty:

- Provides in-class instruction with land-based cultural learning
- Promotes and support the preservation and use of local Indigenous languages: Halq'emeylem
- Provides guidance around decolonization, Indigenization, and reconciliation
- Attends classes to provide knowledge on their area of expertise and more

Process to request Elder or Knowledge Keeper:

- Contact the ISC to seek an Elder or Knowledge Keeper to attend a class by completing the "Request for Elder Services for Faculty" form (ensure to complete the request 15 days prior to the event) at <https://www.ufv.ca/isc/elder-services/>.
- Financial compensation is provided by the hosting department/faculty as an honorarium per the ISC guidelines.
- Check with the ISC if they will bring a helper with them to assist with transportation and attending the event. Ask if the Elder/Knowledge Keeper is comfortable with their cultural teachings being recorded or photographed, and if there are specific moments that the recordings or photography should not be taking place.

Before the Elder or Knowledge Keeper Visit:

- Determine and share the purpose of the Elder's or Knowledge Keeper's visit with your students. How is it connected to the curriculum? Be clear about the intended curriculum outcomes connected to the visit so that it is a meaningful visit for all.
- Provide prior readings/resources so students are prepared appropriately for the visit.
- Prepare your students for the visit in terms of triggers/personal connections and create a space for students to feel safe/respected in your class.

Day of Elder or Knowledge Keeper Visit

- Prepare for respectful care and attention of the guest.
- Set up the classroom for a chair, microphone, etc. for the guest, and request students to turn off or silence cell phones. Do the chairs need to be set up in a circle format? Or are they comfortable with the classroom set up of tables and chairs? Would they like a small table for their sacred items placed by their chair?

- Assist the Elder or Knowledge Keeper with their belongings and walk them to the classroom. Offer water/tea/coffee. Let them know where washrooms are located.
- Acknowledge territory and introduce Elder or Knowledge Keeper to students. (Ask the Elder or Knowledge Keeper if they would like to introduce themselves with their First Nations name, and practice how to pronounce the name so it is done correctly).
- Have student(s) formally thank the speaker and ensure that a gift or offering is presented to the Elder or Knowledge Keeper. You can let the guest know that the honorarium will follow from the department/faculty. (Custom requires the Elders' or Knowledge Keepers' compensation to be presented on the day of the event).
- It is respectful to offer the opportunity of the Elder or Knowledge Keeper to stay for the duration of the event, as an observer.
- At the end of the visit, walk the Elder/Knowledge Keeper out and assist them with any of their belongings.

After the Elder or Knowledge Keeper Visit

- If possible, debrief the session with the Elder/Knowledge Keeper as some Elders or Knowledge Keepers may share deeply personal experiences with students during their visit. Please ask them if they wish to have a few moments in a quiet place to ground themselves after the session.
- Walk the Elder/Knowledge Keeper out and assist them with any of their belongings.
- Debrief the session with your students and do a follow-up activity. This is especially important if there was no time for questions or a discussion at the end of the session. Discuss actions to be taken or initiatives that students can work on beyond the course content to engage in decolonization and reconciliation based on the Elder's or Knowledge Keeper's teachings.
- Provide a follow-up call or email and debrief the session with the Elder/Knowledge Keeper and share with the Elder/Knowledge Keeper what the students have articulated about their learning.

Resources:

[SFU Elders Guide](#)

[Burnaby School District Elders Guide](#)

[KPU Elders Guide](#)

[NVIT Elders Council Document](#)