Reconciliation through education: walking this path together

At a special witnessing ceremony last October, Speaker Gabriel George (Tsleil-Waututh) (right) thanked President Andrew Petter (left), on behalf of the Aboriginal Reconciliation Council, for his commitment to reconciliation. During the ceremony, the council presented a 96-page report detailing 33 calls to action to support reconciliation initiatives at the university.

BY DIANE LUCKOW

“The process of reconciliation is one of the great national undertakings of our time, and affords us an opportunity to be part of a generation that helps to right the wrongs of the past and to produce a brighter future for all Canadians.”

— SFU President Andrew Petter

SFU is meeting the challenge of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s calls to action with a $9-million, three-year strategic investment in projects and initiatives to support reconciliation at all SFU campuses.

After many months of consideration and collaboration last year, SFU’s 16-member Aboriginal Reconciliation Council (ARC) completed a 96-page report, “Walk This Path With Us.” The council presented the report to President Andrew Petter during a special witnessing ceremony in Coast Salish protocol and tradition last October.

The report details 33 calls to action to create, support and sustain a changed and improved environment for SFU’s Aboriginal students, staff and faculty. Priority initiatives include developing and supporting Indigenous curriculum; creating safe and culturally appropriate spaces; and providing cultural awareness preparation for all members of the SFU community.

Chris Lewis, Squamish Nation councillor and SFU governor, co-chained SFU ARC with Kris Magnusson, dean of the Faculty of Education, which was in itself viewed by many to be an act of reconciliation.

Council members included Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal members connected with the SFU community. The council also consulted with the Métis Nation of B.C. and the three local First Nations on whose land SFU sits: the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, as well as the First Nations Education Steering Committee, which is a provincial body that has board member participation from first nations across the province.

The council held eight open forums and 11 council meetings over 11 months to inform the report’s calls to action. At each open forum, the key activity was listening—and making new discoveries. Throughout the process, participants shared their feedback in meaningful ways.

Says Lewis, “While the report is complete, SFU-ARC will continue to encourage Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal groups at SFU to co-create a preferred future in which SFU is known as a safe, welcoming and supportive environment for Aboriginal students, staff and faculty.

A long history of support

The university has a long history of providing academic and support programs to Aboriginal students. These include: the Indigenous Student Centre, university preparatory programs for Aboriginal students interested in attending university, and a host of graduate, professional and undergraduate programs that have been offered at SFU and in the communities it serves.

There is also Indigenous content already embedded in more than 150 courses.

So much has already been accomplished at SFU,” said one ARC participant. “We have an excellent platform (ARC report) from which to launch the next phase of achievements.”

“Says President Andrew Petter, “We want SFU to become an institution where Indigenous peoples flourish. And while many at SFU have been working hard to support Indigenous students, to respect Indigenous knowledge, and to strengthen ties with Indigenous peoples and communities, the ARC report calls upon us to go further and do more in our efforts to be an instrument for reconciliation.

In this spirit, we commit ourselves to giving life to this report, and to working collaboratively and inclusively to answer its calls to action.

For more information and updates about the ARC Report and Calls to Action please visit: sfu.ca/reconciliation.

Education for reconciliation

Last August, SFU’s Faculty of Education kicked off a unique, two-year program, Indigenous Education: Education for Reconciliation.

This Graduate Diploma in Advanced Professional Studies in Education (GDPE) is helping educators learn how to weave Indigenous knowledge and practices into the B.C. school curriculum. “Education for reconciliation is about intercultural learning, and transforming the systemic contexts in which we raise young people,” says education professor Vicki Kelly. “And it’s about finding ways to respond to the call to attend to Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations, and what it means to live on this land together.”

The program, developed through a partnership and collaboration with members of the Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, and the North Vancouver School District, is delivered on traditional Tsleil-Waututh and Squamish Nation lands.

The program attracted a first cohort of 25 educators, including new and seasoned teachers, a Squamish knowledge-holden, an environmental continues on p.5
Indigenizing curriculum takes many guises

BY DIANE LUCKOW

Professor Brenda Morrison, far right, uses the traditional talking circle in her restorative justice class.

When students enroll in criminology professor Brenda Morrison’s courses, they quickly discover that much of the teaching occurs in a talking circle. The circle is a traditional Indigenous symbol, and the talking circle is a practice that represents how Aboriginal peoples view the natural world, and what you can learn from it. Morrison’s use of the Indigenous circle and traditional drumming are just two examples of the myriad ways in which SFU professors and instructors are beginning to indigenize their curriculum and pedagogical practices.

William Lindsay, former director of the Office for Aboriginal Peoples, is now helping to shepherd this work as part of his new role as special advisor on Aboriginal affairs, working with SFU’s vice-president, academic and the vice-president, external relations.

“The goal of indigenizing the curriculum,” he says, “is to ensure all future SFU grads have some experience and knowledge of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada.”

How that occurs is still to be decided, he says. There are many options for indigenizing curriculum. These range from the possibility of a compulsory course in Aboriginal peoples, to adopting Indigenous practices in some courses, as Morrison has done, to including Aboriginal experts as speakers, or working with Aboriginal people to incorporate Aboriginal teachings or culture as part of courses.

Lindsay is currently developing an online tutorial to familiarize faculty and staff with Aboriginal issues relating to colonialism, residential schools, and reconciliation.

The tutorial, “In the Context of Colonialism: The Indian Act, The Residential School System and Reconciliation—A Primer,” will be available online.

Says Lindsay, “It will be one of the options for teaching about the Aboriginal peoples of this country and their experiences.”

Fostering university success for Indigenous students

In January 2018, SFU introduced a new Interim Aboriginal University Preparation Program (IAUPP) that prepares Indigenous students to succeed in pursuing undergraduate studies in the academic program of their choice at SFU.

The program’s learning environment affirms and integrates Indigenous knowledge and perspectives, and offers mentorship and support as students take first-year academic credit and non-credit courses that help ensure a successful transition to undergraduate studies.

Led by new coordinator Ted Wilson, the IAUPP has begun with a small cohort of students and will be offered again in fall 2018 to a complete cohort of up to 15 students.

“In this program, we are trying to make sure that Aboriginal learners have support and access to the benefits they need to succeed,” says Deanna Reder, chair of the Department of First Nations Studies. That’s why they enter SFU as registered students, rather than as continuing education students. This gives them first-year academic course credits and access to all student benefits, including transit passes and library cards. As well, they attend classes at the Burnaby campus.

Deadline for fall registration is April 28, 2018. The course can accommodate up to 15 students. Contact Ted Wilson with further questions at iaupp@sfu.ca or by phone at 778-782-4089. To register, visit http://at.sfu.ca/Upg.

Second-year Cree/Métis student Joelle Majeau says she can now converse in Cree after taking SFU’s introductory course, Plains Cree.

Revitalizing First Nations languages: Plains Cree

The Cree language is one of the most prevalent Indigenous languages in Canada, yet according to Statistics Canada, only about 80,000 people report Cree as their mother tongue.

Cree is one of the latest First Nations languages to be offered in SFU’s Department of Linguistics, which has offered courses in 28 First Nations languages to date. Students taking the three-credit introductory course in Plains Cree (LING 133) learn skills in basic conversation, greetings, introductions, household vocabulary and are also introduced to Plains Cree orthography.

Joelle Majeau, a second-year First Nations Studies student, took the course last fall and says meeting other students who were passionate about learning Cree left her feeling inspired to overcome the challenges of learning a new language.

“Having the option to take this class at the university level meant the world to me,” says Majeau, who is Cree/Métis.

“I don’t have any living family members who speak Cree anymore. I wanted to learn at least one First Nations language so that I could be more involved with elderly First Nations or Métis people who don’t speak a lot, or any, English.”

In 2016, SFU’s First Nations Languages Centre and the Department of Linguistics partnered with Kwi Awt Stelmexw, a non-profit organization from the Squamish Nation community, to introduce a full-time, adult immersion program in the Squamish language, which is almost extinct. The goal is to produce 15 fluent Squamish language speakers each year, growing the number of speakers to 157 by 2027.

The first cohort of students, who completed the program in spring 2017, produced 14 intermediate-level speakers. Many of the students plan to use the program as a springboard to further post-secondary education.

The next intake of students for the Squamish language program is set for fall 2018. For information visit http://at.sfu.ca/aELsZv. Interested in Cree? Visit http://at.sfu.ca/MVzflg.
2017 Graduate Aboriginal Entrance Scholarship winners: Spencer Greening and Derrick O’Keefe

Each year, SFU selects two Aboriginal graduate students to receive Graduate Aboriginal Entrance Scholarships. The scholarship for master’s degree studies is worth up to $30,000 over two years, while the scholarship for PhD studies is worth up to $54,000 over three years.

The scholarships were established in 2013 by the Office of the Vice-President, Academic to encourage Aboriginal students to consider graduate studies and, ultimately, a career in post-secondary work.

Candidates must have Aboriginal ancestry, a minimum grade point average of 3.5 out of a possible 4.33, and have demonstrated outstanding achievement, with particular emphasis on intellectual ability, research ability, and originality.

BY MEGAN BALOG

A committed social activist and proponent of independent media, Derrick O’Keefe is pursuing a master’s degree in communication focused on public interest journalism and the role this type of media plays in covering climate change and ecological crisis.

O’Keefe, a member of the the B.C. Métis Nation with Red River ancestry, already has an extensive background in advocacy journalism. He has written prolifically on a broad variety of topics surrounding social, environmental and political justice, ranging from community to international issues.

His first effort at founding new independent media was Seven Oaks Magazine, an online journal named after the site of one of the most historic battles in Métis history.

In 2014, he co-founded the online independent media platform, Ricochet Media. Created in response to insufficient coverage of the 2012 student strikes in Quebec, this bilingual outlet strives to provide critical coverage of contemporary events in the Canadian political landscape.

A noted anti-war activist, O’Keefe claimed the StopWar Coalition, a broad-based organization in Metro Vancouver that advocates for peace. He also published a number of pieces on Canada’s role in international conflicts. Among his many publications, O’Keefe co-authored Afghan political activist and parliamentarian Malalai Joya’s memoir, A Woman Among Warlords: The Extraordinary Story of an Afghan Who Dared to Raise Her Voice (2009).

For his master’s project O’Keefe is researching the merits of various crowdfunding strategies as best practice for funding independent media. He is also investigating the ways in which independent media can move people to act regarding the global climate crisis.

“As a ‘nature’ student, with two kids and a full roster of activist commitments, this award will help me take time for my research and scholarship,” O’Keefe says. “Having practised independent media for more than 15 years, I’m relishing the chance to study and reflect.”

O’Keefe holds bachelor’s degrees in geography and in education, both from the University of British Columbia.

BY MEGAN BALOG

Spencer Greening is passionate about his Aboriginal heritage, and wants to preserve, protect and promote his heritage at home and beyond.

A member of the Gitga’at First Nation, a Tsimshian tribe on B.C.’s Northwest Coast, he has worked with his community both personally and professionally for years. He was the band’s youngest elected councilor, and also served as a research coordinator and an environmental assessment coordinator.

Now a PhD student in archaeology, he is researching the Gitga’at language (Sinul’gyax), local ecological history, and ways of managing the environment based on Gitga’at stories and ethnography. He says his doctoral work will help to protect one of the community’s sacred watersheds, Laxgalt’isp (Old Town). It will also strengthen the community’s land rights and promote cultural stewardship within the territory.

Greening says his doctoral project also represents important decolonizing work in the face of industry interests and a colonial government structure. As he strives to strengthen his community’s land rights, he hopes to create a research framework that other nations can use in their own decolonizing work.

During his master’s studies at the University of British Columbia, Greening helped his community navigate a judicial review on Indigenous consultation rights, and developed strong abilities in the Sinul’gyax language by working with Tsimshian Elders. He continues to work toward acquiring language fluency.

Greening’s doctoral supervisor, SFU anthropology professor Dana Lepofsky, says: “Spencer is poised to make a real difference in his community and in other Indigenous communities. He is just the kind of person we want to welcome and support in our SFU community.”

Says Greening, “The end vision for this project is for my community to have something to be proud of. Without them and the teachings they have passed down to me, I would not be in this privileged position. I hope my work benefits future generations, and will bring awareness both within the community and outside of the community to recognize the importance of these types of places.”

BY HAILIMAH BEAULIEU

SFU’s Faculty of Health Sciences teamed up with the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) and the Tzu Chi Foundation to implement a six-month pilot project last year that introduced traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) to First Nations communities in B.C.

The first community to participate was the Snuneymuxw First Nation in Nanaimo, B.C. where residents could attend a TCM clinic offering acupuncture services. Strong evidence shows that acupuncture is effective for relieving the chronic pain conditions that many First Nations people suffer.

While the project examines how TCM may contribute to First Nations peoples’ health and well-being, the ultimate goal is to see whether this alternative medicine practice can help spark a revitalization of traditional Indigenous ways of healing.

“The collaboration is an exploration of opportunities to include traditional approaches to healing in new First Nations’ approaches to primary care and the potential of such approaches to empower individuals in First Nations communities to develop their health and wellness journey,” says Joe Gallegher, CEO at the FNHA.

Says project lead John O’Neill, SFU professor of health sciences, “The importance of promoting First Nations health and wellness through traditional healing has long been overlooked by the health care system.”

Traditional healing refers to health practices, approaches, knowledge and beliefs incorporating ceremonies; plant, animal or mineral-based medicines; energetic therapies; or physical/hands-on techniques.

“The recognition that there may be synergies between First Nations traditional healing and other traditional approaches to wellness such as TCM is, therefore, at the core of this project,” says O’Neill.

The project also helps to conceptualize how First Nations traditional health practitioners may be regulated and reimbursed in B.C.

The International College of Traditional Chinese Medicine of Vancouver, which is run by the Tzu Chi Foundation, provided additional acupuncturists to support the project and may also offer scholarships to First Nations students to study acupuncture.
SFU attracts Indigenous faculty members

Meet four new Indigenous faculty members who joined SFU in 2017. Over the past several years, SFU has been actively recruiting Indigenous faculty who can help the university bring Indigenous perspectives to the classroom.

JUNE SCUDELER
June Scudelet (Métis) joined the Department of First Nations Studies as a professor last September. She holds a BA and MA in English from SFU, and a PhD in English from UBC. Her current research explores Indigenous gothic, horror, and science fiction film and literature. She teaches a variety of First Nations Studies courses, including a second-year Indigenous film course in which the students study films by Indigenous filmmakers.

“Students are hungry for Indigenous stories,” says Scudelet. “Stories are such a powerful way to show the resilience of the Indigenous people.”

KARMEN CREY
Karmen Crey, a member of the Stó:lo Nation, joined SFU’s School of Communication last September. She holds BAs from SFU and UBC, an MA from the University of Toronto, and a PhD from the University of California, Los Angeles. Crey is working to complete a book proposal based on her dissertation, which analyzed a surge in Indigenous film production that began in the 1990s in Canadian media institutions. She is currently researching the role of Indigenous film in film festivals, and will begin teaching in fall 2018.

“SFU is an ideal fit for me,” says Crey. “The shift towards reconciliation and the efforts made by the university to support Indigenous representation is important. SFU has a supportive and respectful environment for Indigenous research.”

JEA NAISE GOODWILL
Alanaise Goodwill, a member of Sandy Bay Nation, joined the Faculty of Education as a professor last August, where she teaches courses in First Nations’ language grammar. She holds a PhD in linguistics from UBC, and has spent the past 25 years working with the Squamish Nation to revitalize the Skwxwú7mesh sníchim, the language of his father’s family. He has spent the past 25 years working with the Squamish Nation to revitalize the Squáwx wulú7mesh sníchim language.

Teaching at SFU, he says, “is an opportunity to incorporate both my research and teaching for the Squamish language,” he says.

He also conducts research on Kwak’wala, spoken on the northeastern coast of Vancouver Island and the adjacent B.C. mainland coast.

Challenging the status quo to improve heart health in First Nations communities across the country

Jeff Reading, the First Nations Health Authority Chair in Heart Health and Wellness at St. Paul’s hospital.

BY HALIMAH BEAULIEU
Jeff Reading is not one to rest on his laurels. Appointed two years ago as the inaugural First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) Chair in Heart Health and Wellness at St. Paul’s Hospital in Vancouver, the Indigenous health expert has led several major research and education initiatives to improve the well-being of First Nations communities.

Just a year into his appointment, Reading established the first Indigenous Health Education Access Research and Training (I-HEART) Centre at Providence Health Research Institute with a $500,000 commitment from the Heart & Stroke Foundation of B.C. and Yukon. The Centre has since been challenging the status quo for providing health services to Indigenous peoples.

The I-HEART Centre disseminates and applies Indigenous knowledge to inform new policies and programs for alleviating chronic cardiovascular health conditions among First Nations people. This involves incorporating new and ancient Indigenous ways of knowing related to prevention and wellness, promoting healthy diets and regular exercise, respecting tobacco, and managing other health conditions such as diabetes and obesity, lung and kidney disease, and mental health and substance misuse.

“Improving access to health care means cultivating culturally safe cardiovascular services and programs while tackling the geographic challenge of providing rural and remote access to some of the most vulnerable communities in B.C.,” says Reading.

Reading, who is a Mohawk from the Tyendinaga First Nation in Ontario, has worked on advancing knowledge in Indigenous health issues for more than two decades. Yet he notes that while the rates of heart disease are decreasing in the general Canadian population, they are on the upswing in Aboriginal communities where more than one-third of the population have a chronic health condition.

The I-HEART Centre also supports future generations of health professionals through training and mentoring, and creates student- and community-informed research networks and collaborations across health professions and health sciences disciplines in Canada and internationally.

Reading is currently involved in funded research projects totaling approximately $20 million. These include identifying First Nations health priorities through survey evaluation methods grounded in Indigenous ways of knowing, and strengthening commercial tobacco control measures for First Nations communities.

In remembrance:

Elder Jim White, a member of the Heiltsuk Nation who joined the Elders’ Program at SFU in 2010, passed away from cancer on May 16, 2017. A member of the Heiltsuk Nation, he was 69 years old.

“He was a force of nature and a force for good,” remembers William Lindsay, former director of the Office for Aboriginal Peoples. “He was always smiling, always positive, glad to be helping out at SFU. He was particularly interested in residential school education and reconciliation.”

Klahanie R. Rorick, the first administrator for the Office for Aboriginal Peoples (OAP), passed away from cancer on May 16, 2017. A member of the Tahltan Nation, she worked closely with former OAP director Peter Jacobs in residential school education and reconciliation.

“Says Lindsay, “She is sadly missed but her presence and work will be remembered.”
PhD research praises B.C. program treating Indigenous youth living with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

Billie Joe Rogers devoted five years to completing her SFU PhD thesis, which evaluated a B.C. provincal program to support Indigenous youth living with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and involved in the juvenile justice system. As a member of the Ajumijakang First Nation in Ontario, Rogers’ thesis topic aptly mirrored her deep interests in building healthy Indigenous communities, and in program evaluation. She worked on her PhD in psychology while employed at an Aboriginal consulting firm spanning 13 years of lived and professional experiences. “It was always important to study psychology and get a PhD,” says Rogers. “I found a job at the same time that was really in line with my values, so I absolutely got to bring the skills I learned in the PhD program to my job.”

Rogers, 33, was the first in her family to graduate from university when she earned a BA from the University of Waterloo. At SFU’s June convocation last year, she became the first to earn a PhD. Her thesis evaluated the cultural design aspects of a B.C. program aimed at supporting Indigenous youth undergoing a FASD diagnosis. The program’s goal: to help Indigenous youth living with FASD to rebuild or enhance their cultural connections, and to understand the implications of their FASD diagnosis.

“I think the government program is doing ground-breaking work,” says Rogers. “Its holistic design is very effective. It really focuses on the individual youths and their complex needs.”

She says the number of Canadian youth living with FASD is about 0.2 per cent (two per thousand) but the rates jump to about 26 or 27 per cent for Indigenous youth in the connections system.

“Many people living with FASD don’t display any visual characteristics,” says Rogers, “but they do have behavioral challenges, so people assume they’re difficult or troublemakers. Instead, it’s a brain deficit resulting from prenatal alcohol exposure.”

While there is no common profile for FASD, it frequently presents with secondary disabilities such as mental illness, vulnerability to victimization, unemployment, attention deficit and hyperactivity. Cognitive deficits are also common, such as learning how to remember math facts and difficulties with abstract reasoning and connecting cause and effect.

Rogers’ evaluation revealed that the program is also decreasing the resulting shame and stigma these youth experience, both personally and in the community. As well, participating youth have developed stronger connections to their cultural heritage.

“With the history of colonization and continued colonial policies, we are seeing Indigenous children with no connection to their communities, culture or families,” she says. “The importance of Indigenous culture cannot be understated, as culture is intricately connected with identity, belonging and pride. I’d give the provincial program an A+,” says Rogers, who earned straight A’s throughout her PhD.

“I had that sense of engagement before coming to SFU,” she says. “That’s why I love teaching here. We are responsive and engaged in the communities we work with, and your teaching has to reflect that too.”

Education professor Michelle Pidgeon says her teaching pedagogy is steeped in an Indigenous holistic framework grounded in the four ‘Rs’—respect, relationships, relevance and reciprocity.

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Michelle Pidgeon became a professor of education because of her love for research, not a desire to teach.

But as she took on her teaching responsibilities, with mentorship from colleagues and support from SFU’s Teaching and Learning Centre, Pidgeon found ways to make teaching relevant to herself and her goals.

In the process, she discovered a new passion and talent that was recognized last year with an SFU Excellence in Teaching Award. Pidgeon, who is of Aboriginal ancestry, says her teaching pedagogy is steeped in an Indigenous holistic framework grounded in the four ‘Rs’—respect, relationships, relevance and reciprocity.

“I respect the students and the knowledge and experiences they bring into the classroom,” she says. “We are in a reciprocal relationship even if only for the length of the course—we all have something to learn from each other. All of us are responsible for learning, and I think learning has to be relevant,” she says. “By holding to those four ‘Rs’, it makes me really aware of the way I am in the classroom with students.”

While Pidgeon was completing her undergraduate and master’s degrees at Memorial University she held a variety of positions in student affairs, an experience that also informs her teaching with a student-centred perspective.

“Whether they’re returning as an older learner or entering from high school, they all bring experiences, family dynamics and all kinds of things that make the classroom experience interesting. In a philosophy that is embodied in respect and relevance, establishing connections with each other makes the classroom more exciting and meaningful for them.”

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Says a student nominator, Michelle Pidgeon is an exemplary educator who understands how she teaches is as important as what she teaches. Indeed, Pidgeon sees teaching as an interactive process. For example, she involves students in co-constructing the class curriculum to ensure the topics are relevant to their interests, and she eschews a lecture-based format in favour of teamwork, presentations and group work.

“Let’s make it about the real world,” she says. But Pidgeon doesn’t only teach students, she also learns from them.

“They’ve taught me to always be that curious learner, to always have a passion for what’s happening around us locally and globally, and to respect the knowledge everyone brings into a learning environment,” she says.

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Extraordinary educator completes master’s despite significant obstacles

Cheryl Schweizer

BY DIANE LUCKOW

Returning to university later in life is always a challenge, but Cheryl Schweizer, 53, of the Tl’alt’en Nation, encountered more obstacles than usual.

An itinerant Aboriginal education worker, Schweizer travels throughout the Prince George School District to teach students about Aboriginal language and culture. The Tl’alt’en Nation resides in the Lheidli T’enneh First Nation, which encompasses Prince George, B.C.

In fall 2016, intent on improving her teaching strategies and assessment, she enrolled at SFU to begin a Master of Education (MEd), driving nine hours bi-weekly to attend classes at the Surrey campus.

But in late October, she suffered a major stroke. A week later, she had open heart surgery. It was three months before she could begin rehabilitation work to overcome significant brain damage from the stroke.

“It left me with disabilities, including the loss of much of my long-term memory,” she says. “I had to re-learn a lot, including how to drive, how to type, and even why I was accepted into the MEd program.”

Five years on, students continue to fill EMBA in Indigenous Business and Leadership

BY DIANE LUCKOW

After five years, SFU’s Executive MBA in Indigenous Business and Leadership (EMBA IBL) is still the only accredited MBA program in North America with a focus on Indigenous business.

The popular two-year cohort program began in 2012 at SFU’s Beedie School of Business with bi-annual registration, and has achieved full registration (25 students) for every intake since its inception. In 2017 the program began accepting students annually, again attracting a full complement of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

Candace Derens, director of Aboriginal banking for B.C. and Yukon at the Bank of Montreal, is not Indigenous. She took the program as a way to connect with tomorrow’s Indigenous leaders and also share her financial knowledge.

“But I never realized how much I was going to gain,” she says. “I now have a much deeper understanding of the history and complex issues arising from the treatment of Indigenous people over the last 150 years.”

Trevor Gladwin, a member of the Duncan Cree Nation, Treaty 8 in Northern Alberta, credits the program with two job promotions. He entered the program in 2014 as a business manager with Civo, which provides workforce accommodations around the world. He is now director of Indigenous initiatives, reports to the global senior vice-president, and participates in negotiating comprehensive community agreements.

“This program was truly transformational for me,” he says. “It gave me the confidence, skills and ability to accelerate my company’s growth and drive effective business strategies through an Indigenous lens.”

Joy Cramer, a former deputy minister with the Manitoba government, entered the EMBA IBL program in 2014 because she wanted to switch careers. As a citizen of the Sagkeeng First Nation, she was intrigued to discover a program focused on Indigenous issues as they relate to government and business, but from an Indigenous perspective.

She graduated in 2016 and says, “It was the most wonderful educational experience of my life.”

New Indigenous leadership for program

Last year, Cramer accepted the position of director, Indigenous programs and EMBA IBL program director, taking over from program founder Mark Selman.

“The Beedie School of Business has done it right in terms of transitioning the program to Indigenous leadership,” she says. “The program is now being led by two Indigenous women, myself and Natelie Marie-Rhodes, senior manager, Indigenous programs.”

Cramer says the decision to bring on Indigenous leaders to deliver this program is a refreshing change from the colonial tendency to not pass on leadership opportunities and knowledge.

“The program’s major achievement is that we’ve created an EMBA program that meets the needs of the community,” she says. “The program creates an amazing learning space for Indigenous executives to enhance their leadership skills and learn new business-sector skills.”

Cramer’s mission during the next five years is to support a new Indigenous faculty member, create a process to fund and develop Indigenous business case studies, grow the program’s scholarship and bursary fund, and court donors.

Unlikely to attend classes during the spring 2017 semester, she remained determined to complete her degree.

“She formed a study group with colleagues and friends with the support of her professors, and worked through the curriculum with her local colleagues as pencil classmates,” says education professor Cher Hill, who coordinates SFU’s field and community graduate programs.

Says Schweizer, “I had wonderful people to read to me and the learning they experienced along the way in my healing journey was incredible. I want to ignite that same experience in the kids—to have them read something and have a great conversation about it—to get them excited.”

Schweizer says she got through her ordeal by keeping two goals in mind: acquiring more knowledge about her First Nations language and finishing the MEd program.

She returned to her SFU classes last summer, commuting through the forest fires near Kamloops, B.C., and once narrowly escaping the blaze on her return home. She successfully defended her comprehensive examinations in time to convocate in October.

“She is an extraordinary educator who did exceptional work in our master’s program despite so many obstacles,” says Hill. “We are all so inspired by Cheryl’s determination and dedication to her studies and by her contributions to the field of education.”

Schweizer hopes to return to work this year.

“What I learned in the program will keep me on track as I consider what lens I am using, what my teaching strategies are, and how I’m going to assess what works and what doesn’t,” she says.

“Indigenous education is high on the agenda now,” she adds. “I want to show it’s not a scary process. I want to create a positive process for thinking about how it can be done.”

Philosophers’ Cafés highlight Indigenous culture

Last fall, Gary George, community relations officer with the Office for Aboriginal Peoples (OAP), began moderating a new series of SFU Philosophers’ Cafés that highlight First Nations culture.

SFU has been running the popular Philosophers’ Cafés since 1998. The informal public discussions cafés that highlight First Nations culture.

To date, George has moderated four cafés on two topics: “Viewing Canada’s First Nations America with a focus on Indigenous business.”

The conversations have been great,” he says, “but there is always a lot of tension, too. Indigenous issues are, for sure, very polarizing.”

George plans to continue offering the cafés through spring 2018 on “Indigenous Terminology” and “First Nations Music.”

To find the dates and locations, visit the Pop-up cafés schedule: http://en.sfu.ca/eng/philosophers-cafe.
SFU’s fourth annual Indigenous Day

Students travel to German village to research Indigenous Canadian literature

BY EMMA KEELER-DUGAS

SFU graduate students Treena Chambers and Rachel Taylor spent 10 days in Germany last spring researching the Canadian Indigenous literature archives of Harmut Lutz. A German scholar, Lutz built the collection during his many years at the University of Griefswald, where he devoted much of his research to Canadian culture.

The two students worked out of the library in Lutz’ home in the village of Bömitz. Together, the trio worked through his collection of written archives and audio interviews for a project called The People and the Text, led by Deanna Reder, chair of SFU’s Department of First Nations Studies.

The project connects Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars and students through an online, annotated bibliography of Indigenous texts.

“We went through piles of audio interviews with Indigenous writers from the last 15 to 20 years— they were all on cassettes,” says Chambers, an undergraduate Métis student in the School for International Studies.

The students plan to digitize the interviews and make them available in the SFU library and on Reder’s websites this spring.

Taylor, a master of publishing student, and Chambers also catalogued Lutz’s first-edition books by Indigenous writers, and were intrigued to see an Indigenous manuscript that had never been published. “This manuscript was a significant find for Indigenous literature,” says Chambers.

After working with the students, and talking to Reder, Lutz decided to donate his nearly 900-title collection of Indigenous literature to the SFU Library. The collection will be available in May 2018.

Taylor, a mixed Iñupiaq (Alaskan native) and settler, describes the research trip to Germany as a wonderful opportunity, while Chambers says, “For me, it was a personally interesting trip to see my studies and my background engage together.”
The “Wild Archaeology” experience—a new form of Indigenous archaeology

BY DIANE LUCKOW

SFU archaeology professor Rudy Reimer spent last summer filming for season two of APTN’s television show, “Wild Archaeology.” It is the first documentary TV series to explore the archaeological record of Canada’s Indigenous peoples from their point of view.

“The show brings to life over 12,000 years of human history in Canada,” says Reimer, a member of the Squamish Nation and a co-host of APTN’s television show, “Wild Archaeology.” It conveys a culturally informed sense of the Squamish Nation and a co-host of the archaeological record of Canada’s Indigenous and archaeology.”

Archeology professor Rudy Reimer, co-host of the APTN documentary series “Wild Archaeology,” brings to life 12,000 years of human habitation in Canada.

The series also showcases how archaeologists are collaborating with local First Nations communities to discover and tell these ancient histories.

The first season of 13 episodes, which aired in 2016 and is now available online, explored ancient histories. The second season, which will continue to film this year and air in fall 2019, will examine how the ancient past is benefiting modern First Nations communities across the country, including some on B.C.’s Sunshine Coast, in northern B.C. and in northern Ontario.

“IT features current, cutting-edge research in collaboration with First Nations peoples that will bring to life 12,000 years of human habitation in Canada,” says Reimer. “You will see how the artists embrace new ideas, mixing traditional Coast Salish Art with contemporary art. They are bringing the past into the present, using new mediums and materials.”

Students celebrate Coast Salish art at Bill Reid Centre

BY EMMA KEELER-DUGAS

A new exhibition at SFU’s Bill Reid Centre, “Intangible: Memory and Innovation in Coast Salish Art,” tells the stories of six Coast Salish artists through the lens of students enrolled in a Moving Images course in SFU’s School of Interactive Arts and Technology. The students created six short, documentary-style videos about the artists, their work and how it reflects changes in tradition. The exhibition, which is open until fall 2018 at the Burnaby campus, showcases the following artists:• Aaron Nelson-Moody, Sḵwx̱wú7mesh/Squamish, an engraver,
• Sesemiya/Ira Trudy Williams, Sḵwx̱wú7mesh/Squamish, a textile artist,
• Rosanne Charles, Semiahmoo, mixed media artist
• Ostwelve/Ronnie Dean Harris, Stó:lo/Stl’atl’ic’/Lil’wat/Nlaka’pamux,
• multimedia artist Marvin Oliver, Quinault/Istia Pueblo, sculptor and printmaker
• Jesslie/Leslie Sam, Cowichan, Penelakut & Esquimalt, printmaker

Centre director Bryan Myles says the exhibition celebrates the distinct yet intangible connection between artists’ contemporary practice and the Coast Salish Art tradition that has been lost.

The exhibit includes artists’ biographies, wall panels and collages, and a large touch display where visitors can watch each short documentary.

“THE students did a wonderful job,” says Myles. “You will see how the artists embrace new ideas, mixing traditional Coast Salish Art with contemporary art. They are bringing the past into the present, using new mediums and new materials.”

ADMSSION TO SFU

All applicants to SFU are required to apply by the deadline*

2018 Application Deadlines

| FALL TERM | FEBRUARY 28 |
| SPRING TERM | SEPTEMBER 15 |
| SUMMER TERM | JANUARY 31 |

*IAUPP DEADLINE: APRIL 28

Standard Admission Process

If you meet general university and program-specific admission requirements, you will be directly admissible to that SFU degree program.

Details: yourstory.sfu.ca

Aboriginal Undergraduate Admission Policy

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Details: www.sfu.ca/students/auap

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This program supports your transition to undergraduate studies. It includes first-year academic credit courses that integrate humanities and social sciences with Indigenous perspectives, as well as literacy and quantitative classes.

Details: www.sfu.ca/iaupp

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