



the RAVEN

Summer 2013—EDITION 01



Dr. Daniel Heath Justice
(Photo: V. Saran, 2013)

GREETINGS from the PROGRAM CHAIR

One of my elders, the Cherokee-Quapaw/Chickasaw scholar Geary Hobson, always closes his correspondence with the words “Keep a fire.” This small but significant phrase serves as a reminder of relationship and responsibility, and an active acknowledgment of commitment. His words carry particular significance now, as I reflect on this remarkable year from a university that sits upon

the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the Musqueam people. This acknowledgment is about far more than the important act of recognizing whose land is the literal as well as symbolic foundation of UBC; it is also about acknowledging the importance of good relationships, and the knowledge that these are only possible through hard work and willingness to engage our past as well as our present.

The reverberations of Idle No More continue to shape the conversation about Indigenous peoples in important and sometimes unexpected ways. For the first time in many of our students’ lives, Indigenous concerns became the talk of the airwaves, the internet, the street, and the classroom. Hope was kindled, and the inevitable backlash merely strengthened the resolve of informed people to bring critical truths to public consciousness. Round dances and flash mobs were everywhere; the sounds of many voices gathered in song filled city squares, shopping malls, and streets in Canada and around the world. Although the media has shifted its attention to other issues, the momentum for positive transformation has not dissipated. The conversation is not over; people from all back-

grounds are still talking with one another, often for the first time. Many Canadians are coming to the realization that there is a substantial disconnect between self-congratulatory national narratives and the lived realities of Indigenous peoples in this country. They are realizing that we can do better. Communities are rebuilding their own strength and asserting their responsibilities to the land, to the ancestors, to the future. Connections and alliances are forming; a growing movement with a new vision of fierce, loving justice is rising up in response to the alienating exclusions of the current age. And everywhere, from Parliament Hill to False Creek, we hear “Where do we go from here?” We might also ask, “How do we keep this fire going?”

There is no single answer to those questions; we cannot know now what the full harvest of this planting might be. But perhaps that is where First Nations Studies makes its contribution, especially at such powerful and potentially transformative moments. This is about the rigorous, long-term, and necessary work that makes possible today’s good relationships and better tomorrows. We

...continued on page 2

...continued from page 1

ask the critical questions that help bridge the gap between history and the present, between the dehumanizing narratives of Aboriginal deficiency and the life-affirming stories of Indigenous resurgence, between Indigenous nations and settler peoples, between the academy and the world. We look to the complexities, not the sound bites, the bigger context, not just the moment. We examine different and challenging ways of thinking about these many meaningful relationships. This is where Indigenous theory meets practice, where our local commitments are informed by and influence our global connections.

To do this work in this place is both a privilege and a responsibility, and it is one to which we are committed—and not just for these moments, no matter how momentous they might be. We invite you to join us as we continue the conversation, and as we keep these possibilities burning brightly, to give both warmth and light for generations to come.

**Keep a fire,
Daniel**



L-r: Matthew Norris, Andrea Reid, Robyn Putnam, Eden Imbeau, and Lydia Ruenzel at their Musqueam community Practicum presentation this spring (Photo: FNSP)

DECOLONIZING RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

This year, five FNSP students took part in the fourth-year Research Practicum and were able to put theory into practice. Students worked with several different Aboriginal organizations and communities to produce work that is aligned with decolonizing and ethical research methodologies. Practicum partner organizations and communities this year included the Longhouse Council of

Native Ministry, the Union of BC Indian Chiefs Resource Centre, Aboriginal HIPPIY Canada, Women Against Violence Against Women Rape Crisis Centre, and Kwikwetlem First Nation. The Research Practicum is at the heart of the First Nations Studies Program. Each year over 100 potential partners are invited to participate and students often identify the Research Practicum as the most meaningful experience of their undergraduate careers.

UBC HOSTS RENOWNED WRITERS

This past academic year, the First Nations Studies Program has been proud to host a number of prominent Indigenous scholars, artists, and activists at UBC. Some of these guests include the celebrated writers Thomas King (Cherokee) and Lee Maracle (Sto:lo), and prominent Anishinaabe intellectual Leanne Simpson. Students had the enriching opportunity to visit with some of these guests in class, over lunch, and at public lectures. In the future, FNSP aims to host many more scholars, artists, community leaders, and performers as a means to continue and expand the important conversations taking place in our classrooms.



Dr. Thomas King and Dr. Daniel Heath Justice
(Photo: FNSP)

FIRST NATIONS STUDIES STUDENTS go ABROAD

In search of personal and academic growth, two current FNSP students studied abroad as a part of their degree program.

As a participant in the Haida Gwaii Semester Program in Natural Resource Management, Katherine Carey's classroom became the land and the community. She had the opportunity to enrich her education through special speakers and events, such as attending an Enbridge Pipeline Panel as a part of a joint review. Through this program, Katherine was immersed in the local community and came to understand the differences between

urban and rural Aboriginal issues. This experience added value to what was being taught inside the classroom at UBC.

Erica Baker studied at the University of Queensland in Australia for a semester in 2012. Through her courses in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Unit, Erica studied political theory, contemporary issues, and Aboriginal kinship specific to the Australian context. This was in addition to completing a self-directed study with a faculty supervisor. This experience gave more depth to her understanding of international Indigenous topics, politics, and theory.

RECOGNIZED for RESEARCH EXCELLENCE

FNSP faculty are making major contributions to the field of Critical Indigenous Studies, and have recently received national and international recognition for their work. These achievements demonstrate the high quality of scholarship in the Program's curriculum and mentorship.

Engaging with Idle No More

Dr. Glen Coulthard (Yellowknives Dene) has become a prominent voice in the Idle No More movement, inside and outside the classroom. With his research focus in Indigenous contemporary theory and politics, Dr. Coulthard has been interviewed by numerous newspapers, radio shows and television programs about the movement, including BC Almanac on CBC Radio One, the morning news for CBC Kelowna, the Vancouver Province, APTN, The City on CiTR 101.9, and Victoria's Sunday Morning Public Affairs on CFAX 1070. In addition, Dr. Coulthard has spoken at teach-ins in the community and contributed an analysis on the movement's historical context in an effort to provide a better understanding of the transformative political possibilities in the present moment. His work has empowered the conversation started by Idle No More.



Dr. Glen Coulthard
(Photo: V. Saran, 2013)

Indigenous Rights in a Global Context

Dr. Sheryl Lightfoot (Anishinaabe) has recently been appointed the Canada Research Chair in Global Rights and Politics. Dr. Lightfoot's research program features four interconnected projects that will shed light on how Indigenous political actors are negotiating rights claims with and within individual states and navigating the international system itself.



Dr. Sheryl Lightfoot
(Photo: V. Saran, 2013)

Examining Indigenous Literature

Dr. Daniel Heath Justice (Cherokee) is also a CRC recipient as the Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Literature and Expressive Culture. He will explore some of the diverse ways that Indigenous writers, performers, artists, and culture workers express and create kinship and belonging.

Representing FNSP, as well as Political Science and English, Sheryl and Daniel are two of eight Research Chairs recently appointed or renewed at the University of British Columbia.



Dr. Dory Nason
(Photo: V. Saran, 2013)

DR. DORY NASON receives UBC KILLAM TEACHING PRIZE

Dr. Dory Nason (Anishinaabe) is the recent recipient of a UBC Killam Teaching Prize for outstanding achievement as a teacher. The prize is awarded annually, from the Killam Endowment Fund, to a few select faculty nominated by students, colleagues, and alumni in recognition of excellence in teaching.

As an instructor of many of the core courses in the FNSP curriculum, Dr. Nason is influential in the intellectual development of First Nations Studies students. Her commitment to student learning is tangible, as she has been engaged with student-held events outside of the classroom, and has been a moderator for a FNSP student panel on Indigenous feminisms at the F Word Conference.

Dory Nason is an enrolled member of the Leech Lake Band of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe. She holds a joint position with First Nations Studies and the Department of English. Her research focuses on contemporary Indigenous feminisms and related Indigenous women's intellectual history and contemporary Indigenous literature.



ALUMNI put DEGREES to WORK

The First Nations Studies Program hosted its first annual alumni reception titled, "FNSP in the World," in January 2013. Hosted in Sty-Wet-Tan Hall at the First Nations Longhouse, this event built new connections and relationships between FNSP alumni, current students, and faculty. One FNSP alumna who was in attendance, Kim Aldridge, has opened up since the reception about how her First Nations Studies education has guided her career.

As a Child and Youth Activities Worker and previously an Aboriginal Youth Activities Worker with the Richmond Youth Service Agency, Kim

has been able to combine her love for working with youth with her passion for her First Nations Studies education. Kim has found that the same positive attitudes that she experienced in the classroom have carried on with her after graduation: "I learned from the Elders that we all have a role and a gift in society. I learned to stand in solidarity with First Nations people and others against current injustices that are perpetuated through systematic racism. I also learned about the voices and ways of knowing that are being heard in this dialogue and those that are not."

Kim recognizes the gifts that her First Nations Studies degree has given her. These gifts include

the experience of internal reflection and critique, as well as becoming empowered to look critically at the way society functions and sorts individuals and Nations into broad categories of identity and experience. Because of this, Kim is very thankful for the students, staff, faculty, and alumni who have assisted her on her journey. "FNSP gave me an amazing education because of its small class size, its experiential learning style—along with theory and research, the integration of knowledge such as filming and interviewing, and experience working with Aboriginal communities."

FNSP STUDENTS make a DIFFERENCE

The First Nations Studies Student Association (FNSSA) has been highly successful this academic year, being very involved in the community and launching an Indigenous studies undergraduate journal and blog.

Members of FNSSA were key in organizing January's Idle No More demonstration on campus.

This energy came from participating in Idle No More organizing in the Vancouver community. Students came together and made posters for multiple Idle No More events, demonstrating their support as First Nations Studies students.

The energy from this period generated a time of new beginnings for the student association. FNSSA launched a call for submissions for the first edition of an Indigenous Studies under-

graduate journal at UBC, in conjunction with an ongoing Indigenous Studies blog.

The announcement of the Journal was officially held at their event titled New Beginnings at Rhizome Social Justice Cafe in April 2013. This event brought together the greater community to connect, celebrate, and engage in discussions around the Journal ethics protocol and potential.

In addition to these milestones, members of the student association were panelists at the F Word Conference this past April. Moderated by FNSP Professor Dr. Dory Nason, their panel topic was on Indigenous feminisms. Students presented to over 60 delegates and featured some of their original film work on the subject matter.

In the fall, FNSSA anticipates the publication of the Journal's first edition and will be hosting a launch event to celebrate the occasion.

Engage with the Journal or Indigenous Studies blog: blogs.ubc.ca/isujblog. Submissions welcome!



The FNSP student panel with Dr. Dory Nason at the F Word Conference (Photo: Erica Baker)