



message from Dr. Daniel Justice, Program Chair:

NO TRUTH, NO RECONCILIATION

This year was heralded as the “Year of Reconciliation,” and the twin themes of truth and reconciliation were everywhere: on Parliament Hill, in the news, in daily conversation, in the classroom. Strangers came together and talked about Indigenous peoples’ experiences under Canadian settler colonialism, often for the first time; for some, these were new and powerful discussions, while for others, they were part of an ongoing effort to be heard and to have their experiences recognized by others. Yet it was clear throughout all of the teach-ins, symposia, class lectures, media events, and public events that “truth” and “reconciliation” are not self-evident terms, and that what they mean for resurgent Indigenous nations is not necessarily what is meant by those in the broader culture who are invested in the status quo. And it was disappointing but not surprising that on the same week as the national Truth and Reconciliation Commission came to Vancouver, revelations about an anti-Aboriginal chant at a UBC frosh week event came to light (along with

a rape chant from the same period), prompting President Toope to strike a Task Force that has recommended sweeping measures to address rape culture and racism on this campus.

What, then, is the use of “truth and reconciliation,” especially when, locally and nationally, we continue to see evidence of so much misunderstanding and willful ignorance about Indigenous peoples, issues, and histories? Are the terms just empty rhetoric, or do they gesture at unrealized but important possibilities for change?

The work we do in First Nations Studies is firmly committed to the first part of that pair—truth—and affirms the potential of different kinds of relationships that are rooted in the cause of justice. If this is “reconciliation,” it is of an entirely different kind than that so often offered by politicians and media personalities, for whom the assumption is that Indigenous peoples be reconciled to second-class status. We need a new relationship, one in which we grapple with the realities of our shared histories and present, and work toward a more honest and

more loving future.

In FNSP, we insist that the current state of affairs is not good enough, that Indigenous peoples are self-determining agents of change, not mere objects of study. We train students to be robust researchers, critical thinkers, and mindful skeptics of arbitrary authority, and we encourage them to take seriously the ideas and voices of real people as well as the gaps and presences of the archive. And we care enough to hold one another up even as we hold one another to account, for we know that we need our very best thinking, efforts, and selves to ensure a better present and future, for all of us. This is more than reconciliation—it is a radically renewed relationship. It is within our reach, but it will take real work, and real commitment, from all of us. And good teaching and scholarship are essential to this effort, for we cannot change this relationship with the failed ideas and stereotypes of the colonial past. To realize better times we require better ideas.

To this end, we are proud to announce the

First Nations Studies Program



Mohawk Scholar Audra Simpson speaking at the Dialogues in Critical Indigenous Studies book launch
(Photo: FNSP)

...continued from cover

initial stages of the Institute for Critical Indigenous Studies (ICIS) in the Faculty of Arts, which will see an expansion of our program's capacity for cutting-edge research, ethical community engagement, and challenging undergraduate and graduate education, in collaboration with the First Nations Languages Program and other partner units at UBC. There is much work yet to be done, but we are fortunate to have so many good people coming together to help realize the Institute's possibilities as one of the leading sites for Indigenous Studies scholarship in North America. We hope you will join us in this exciting endeavour.

**Keep a fire,
Daniel**



FNSP Alumni at the Mixer
(Photo: V Saran)

CONNECTING with BRIGHT MINDS and CREATIVE THINKERS

Over this past academic year, the First Nations Studies Program has been proud to host a number of celebrated Indigenous scholars, activists, and artists at UBC. Some of these guests include the prominent Anishinaabe intellectual Leanne Simpson, Cherokee literature and law scholar Jace Weaver, Aboriginal activist and Olympic athlete Waneek Horn-Miller (Mohawk), and comedian Ryan McMahon (Anishinaabe). In addition, FNSP co-hosted language teacher Snxakila Clyde Tallio (Nuxalk) and distinguished artist Beau Dick (Kwakwaka'wakw) during their UBC residencies. Students had the enriching opportunity to visit with some of these guests in class, over lunch, and at public lectures.

In the fall, the Program hosted Rising Up!, an arts and culture night that brought together the wider-community to celebrate Indigenous youth performance arts. The Program has also sponsored numerous public events this year,

including a screening of the film, *The Lesser Blessed*, during the Vancouver Indigenous Media Arts Festival, which included a Q&A period with Dogrib author Richard Van Camp, who wrote the original novel. Other events included a teach-in on reconciliation to accompany the Vancouver TRC events, a student information luncheon at Langara College, the Dialogues in Critical Indigenous Studies book launch and symposium, the book launch for *The Winter We Danced*, the Indigenous Women in Film screenings, and dialogue events with visiting scholars Beau Dick, Leanne Simpson, and Snxakila Clyde Tallio. We would like to acknowledge and give thanks to graduate students Kelsey Wrightson and Matthew Wildcat for their efforts in organizing the Dialogues in Critical Indigenous Studies book launch and research symposium, co-sponsored by FNSP.

FACULTY RESEARCH at the CUTTING EDGE

Our faculty have been reaching new heights in the field of Indigenous Studies this year. Dr. Glen Coulthard's much-anticipated book, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (University of Minnesota Press), is being released on August 15th, 2014. His co-edited book, *Recognition versus Self-Determination: Dilemmas of Emancipatory Politics*, was released in spring 2014 by UBC Press. He and Dr. Dory Nason were also featured contributors to the groundbreaking anthology, *The Winter We Danced: Voices from the Past, the Future, and the Idle No More Movement* (ARP Books), which was released to great acclaim in March.

Dr. Daniel Justice, Chair of the First Nations Studies Program, has two forthcoming books. *The Oxford Handbook of Indigenous American Literature*,

co-edited with James H. Cox, is due for release from Oxford University Press at the end of July. *Badger*, an animal cultural history in the celebrated Animal series from Reaktion Books, will be published on October 15th, 2014.

Canada Research Chair Dr. Sheryl Lightfoot has been awarded a SSHRC Insight Development Grant for her new project, "The Politics of State Apologies to Indigenous Peoples." Dr. Lightfoot has begun conducting a three-year research project that focuses on a comparative case study analysis of state apologies to Indigenous peoples in three countries: Canada, the United States, and Norway. She also has chapters in the recently published *Our Cause Will Ultimately Triumph: Profiles in American Indian Sovereignty* (Ed. Tim Alan Garrison 2014) and *Multilevel Citizenship* (Ed. Willem Maas 2013).

CONNECTING STUDENTS and ALUMNI

Our second annual Alumni Mixer was held this past February to bring together alumni, faculty, staff, and upper-year students for networking opportunities. This year's event was held at Nuba Restaurant, where guests were treated to some delicious food and drink. Each year, the Program strives to bring together both alumni and students to increase alumni engagement and to keep the FNSP community strong. Thank you to all who joined us for the event, and thanks to Hannah Butson, our Marketing & Communications Assistant, for her great work in organizing the evening.

BRINGING the CLASSROOM to the COMMUNITY



Students in the FNSP student-directed seminar on reconciliation after their community presentation at the UBC Longhouse (Photo: Erica Baker)

For the first time FNSP offered a student-directed seminar titled “The Politics of Indigenous-Settler Reconciliation in Canada.” 15 students formed the classroom community which purposefully took place during the time of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s National Event in Vancouver and gave students an opportunity to engage with what was actively happening outside of the classroom. The course quickly generated attention from the UBC community,

including in an article published by UBC Public Affairs.

As a part of their coursework, students had the opportunity to produce resources for Indigenous Foundations, an online resource on key topics relating to the histories, politics, and cultures of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. During the term, students also took ownership over their learning through in-class presentations on topics related to reconciliation that they are passionate

about. In addition, the class created a display case for the Irving K Barber Learning Centre that outlined what the students were critically thinking and discussing in regards to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Indian Residential Schools legacy. The display case was a part of a larger Our Truth UBC exhibition during September and October.

At the end of the term, students in the course elected to hold an event at the First Nations Longhouse to present back to the community what they had learned over the semester. The event involved presentations from students, multiple displays, and a community feast. In addition, students from the course offered three sessions with Humanities 101, a community program run by UBC in the Downtown East-side, to disseminate what they learned in the classroom to a wider audience. The seminar was a great success due to the hard work of our passionate FNSP students.



PUTTING FACILITATION SKILLS to WORK

Anna McKenzie and Matt Ward, upper-year students in the First Nations Studies Program, took on the challenge of presenting a double session workshop for student leaders at UBC about the Indigenous Studies Undergraduate Journal and Blog, an initiative of the First Nations Studies Student Association (FNSSA).

The workshop was offered during the UBC Student Leadership Conference, with the first session focusing on a summary of the project and the second session covering personal processes of being a student leader. Matt shared with attendees that it is never too late to be engaged, as he became active with FNSSA in his third year. Anna focused on her experiences of transferring to UBC and how she found a balance between self-care and campus involvement.

The workshop included 15 attendees from different faculties on campus, some with little exposure to Indigenous topics. Part of the workshop was spent making people feel comfortable talking about the subject matter through interactive activities. What Anna and

Matt found was that many students were interested in discussing the topics but lacked the basic knowledge to effectively participate in discussion. This revealed that there are people wanting to learn but who don’t know how to go about this process, a potential opportunity that Matt sees for FNSSA in the future.

“As terrifying as it was it was one of the most rewarding experiences I’ve had at UBC.”

— MATT WARD

Anna and Matt were assigned to a professional staff member as a mentor in building their workshop, something they noted that was invaluable to the success of their two sessions. In the process, they learned how to take what they were learning in a classroom setting and to translate it into a workshop for those wanting to learn more about Indigenous Studies—an invaluable skill for the future.

UBC’S FIRST POW-WOW on the HORIZON

The First Nations Studies Student Association (FNSSA) and the Indigenous Students Association (InSA) are currently working towards hosting UBC’s first Pow-wow. This past spring they hosted a coffee house and silent auction fundraiser in support of the initiative. Guests at the coffee house were treated to performances by the Dancers of Damelahamid, Kat Norris, Ryan Tomm, Laura Grizzlypaws, Cool Hand Uke, Manoe Mohale, and Chief Rock. The exciting event raised over \$1500.

FNSP students Salia Joseph and Rebecca Baker are learning the charge on this initiative which is planned for the 2014-15 academic year. To support the first Pow-wow at UBC or to find out more about how you can be involved, please contact FNSSA by emailing fnssa.ubc@gmail.com.

Support UBC's first Pow-wow
LEARN HOW
fnssa.ubc@gmail.com



alumni profile:

GLOBAL-THINKER LAURA McLENNAN

In the heart of the border region between Thailand and Burma is FNSP alumna Laura McLennan. Laura has been living and working with Indigenous groups in those areas for several years. Focusing on providing education in these communities, Laura has been able to put her FNSP skills and knowledge to work.

Laura is Métis from British Columbia and is a 2008 FNSP graduate, who later went onto complete her Bachelor's of Education and is currently finishing her Master's degree in Adult Education through the Adult Learning and Global Change Program at UBC. While in FNSP, Laura completed her Research Practicum placement with the Aboriginal Mother Centre Society. Dr. Linc Kesler was a large influence on the lessons she learned that later proved invaluable in the field. One of those important skills was about building trust and relationships, something she practices while working with communities in the region.

It was a program offered by the University of Victoria's Centre for Asia-Pacific Initiatives that brought her to Thailand for a 6-month placement. Not ready to go home after that

ended, she was hired by her host organization to continue her work. During her time in Thailand, she has worked for a human rights organization in Bangkok to deliver their programming and has taught at a small international school. She has also worked at the Mae Tao Clinic and has volunteered her time on the border to teach about the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as most people in the region are Indigenous refugees.

Laura has observed challenges between government and societal understandings of who is accepted as being "Indigenous," as the Burmese government has promoted the idea that certain groups are not Indigenous. Laura has had to negotiate these ideas with students, requiring her to develop a way to translate her critical understandings of colonization. She is also working to break down false stereotypes about Indigenous peoples and is faced with the daily challenge of helping individuals un-learn misconceptions they have been taught their entire lives. Through these challenges, Laura persists and finds new ways for learning and building relationships.

Her time in Thailand and Burma has been enriching from an Indigenous Studies standpoint. Laura has observed parallels between the Burmese government's ceasefire negotiations and the land claims negotiations in Canada. She has witnessed land rights issues and negotiations that have played out in favour of international corporations and the government, which has resulted in the selling of Indigenous lands to logging companies without proper negotiation or compensation to the local Indigenous groups. Laura has been able to transfer what she has learned in FNSP to the global context to better understand the complex relationships and politics of the region.

Although Laura is far away, she has not forgotten her FNSP roots. She has one piece of advice for current and graduating FNSP students and that is to do something that takes you out of your comfort zone. For Laura, the move to Bangkok definitely took her out of her comfort zone, but she describes it as something that was and remains a transformative experience.



Mohawk activist and Olympic athlete Waneek Horn-Miller speaks with FNSP students during the UBC Student Leadership Conference (Photo: Alex Chau)

meeting WANEK HORN-MILLER, ABORIGINAL OLYMPIAN

Asking students to think of the next big thing in the Indigenous rights movement, Waneek Horn-Miller met with students in the First Nations Studies Program for a lunch and discussion during her visit to UBC this past January. Waneek was chosen as the main keynote speaker for this year's UBC Student Leadership Conference, one of the largest student conferences of its kind in North America. She shared her message of determination and perseverance as she reminded students that even if there are a thousand reasons to give up, look for the one reason why you should not. Thank you, Waneek, for connecting with our community.

DR. LINC KESLER receives distinguished YALE ALUMNI AWARD

FNSP would like to extend very warm congratulations to Dr. Linc Kesler on being awarded Yale University's prestigious 2013 Wa-Na-Xi-Lay Hunkah (Henry Roe Cloud) Native Alumni Achievement Award. Dr. Kesler is the director of the UBC First Nations House of Learning and Senior Advisor to the President on Aboriginal Affairs. He was also FNSP Chair and a core course instructor for the first ten years of the Program.



DR. GLEN COULTHARD receives 2014 WALL SCHOLAR RESEARCH AWARD

Congratulations to FNSP faculty member Dr. Glen Coulthard (Yellowknives Dene) on being named one of the recipients of the prestigious 2014 Wall Scholar Research Awards by the Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies. The award selection is based primarily on the candidate's scholarly achievements, excellence in his or her proposal for innovative research during residency, and the initiatives proposed to contribute to the intellectual life of the Institute. The selection committee also takes into account the candidate's demonstrated commitment to research outside usual disciplinary boundaries. Dr. Coulthard will be in residence at the Institute for the 2014-15 academic year.

Dr. Glen Coulthard speaking at the Dialogues in Critical Indigenous Studies book launch (Photo: FNSP)



CONGRATULATIONS CLASS of 2014

This year, the Program hosted a graduation celebration dinner for its spring graduates at Salmon 'n' Bannock Bistro. Those students able to attend joined faculty, staff, and friends of the Program to share excellent food and to exchange memories and thanks. Graduates were gifted with custom-designed FNSP graduation stoles, mugs, and other small tokens of appreciation. Congratulations to our 2014 graduating class. We look forward to seeing your continuing contributions and hearing about your future adventures.

with THANKS we say GOODBYE, for now...

FNSP would like to give thanks to Hannah Butson, Janey Lew, and Erica Baker who, after many contributions to the Program, will be moving on to new opportunities. Hannah, who has been a Marketing & Communications Assistant with the Program for over a year, will be turning to community-based work and more time in the arts world. Janey Lew, who has been an instructor with the Program, will be focusing on her brand new role as a mother. Erica Baker has been a Project Assistant with the Program for two years and will be moving on to graduate school in the fall. Thank you Hannah, Janey, and Erica—we wish you all the best in the future.



Practicum students with Dr. Sheryl Lightfoot, Practicum supervisor, at the UBC Longhouse community presentations (Photo: FNSP)

from snowboarding to diving into archives: PUTTING DECOLONIZING RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES into PRACTICE

This year, nine FNSP students took part in the fourth-year Research Practicum and put classroom theory into community practice. Students were paired with several different Aboriginal organizations and communities to produce work that is aligned with decolonizing and ethical research methodologies. Students worked with organizations to negotiate, design, and implement projects that would address each partner's research needs. At the end of the academic year, Practicum students presented their findings back to the Musqueam and UBC communities.

Research Practicum partner organizations and communities this year included the Aboriginal Community Career Employment Services Society (ACCESS), the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre, the First Nations Health Authority, the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society, the Blanche MacDonald Project, the Britannia Community Centre, and the First Nations Snowboard Team, hosted by the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw Squamish Nation. Thank you to all of our community partners for supporting the growth and development of our students.



Erica Baker
(Photo: Martin Dee)

student profile:
**GRADUATING STUDENT
ERICA BAKER**

With the depth in research training and opportunity for hands-on learning through the FNSP Research Practicum, Erica Baker says that she feels well prepared to be a graduate student this fall. Erica's Practicum project this year was hosted by the First Nations Snowboard Team and Squamish Nation, where she actively researched the needs of Aboriginal snowboarders in reaching the Olympic podium. In September, Erica will be attending Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, to make the unexpected leap in beginning her Masters of Arts in Kinesiology and Health Studies, where she will be continuing her research interests from the Practicum.

Erica's project brought her to the mountain where she spent time regularly training with the Snowboard Team's athletes and following them to provincial competitions. Not one to identify as an athlete herself, Erica developed a deep passion for her research question and worked hard to produce meaningful and practical results for her host organization and Nation. During this process, she attended the National Aboriginal Physical Activity Conference and presented at the UBC Multidisciplinary Undergraduate Research Conference. Building upon the theory she learned in the classroom, she was able to learn about how to work with and for Indigenous communities, and how to create an ethical research project that fully respects community protocols.

Erica also engaged with her community through several initiatives outside of the classroom. This past spring, Erica was awarded the Dean's Award for an Outstanding Leader in the Faculty of Arts. The honour is given out annually to a graduating student in the Faculty. Erica was selected based on her depth of involvement in the First Nations Studies Program and the UBC community. She is also the recipient of a SSHRC Canada Graduate Scholarship, which will provide funding for her MA based on high standard of achievement in her undergraduate studies.

Most notably, Erica was a co-founder and current outgoing President of the First Nations Studies Student Association (FNSSA) in addition to holding the position of co-Editor-in-Chief of the Indigenous Studies Undergraduate Journal, a project she worked to establish with FNSSA. She hopes that future students will be actively engaged with the FNSP student community for years to come, as the friends she made during her time in the Program became what most defined her time as a student. She believes that FNSP uses its relatively small size to its strength, and from her observations the potential for new ideas and initiatives to be generated from the tight-knit student community is infinite.



(Photo: Johnny Mack)

**NUU-CHAH-NULTH LAW SCHOLAR
JOHNNY MACK joins FNSP FACULTY**

We are very pleased to welcome Johnny Mack (Nuu-chah-nulth) as our newest faculty colleague. A Trudeau Foundation scholar currently finishing his Ph.D. in Law at the University of Victoria, Johnny holds a joint appointment in FNSP and Law, and will be teaching a course on Indigenous legal traditions for FNSP beginning spring 2015. Johnny's research interests are in Indigenous legal traditions, Indigenous constitutionalism, subjectivity, critical theory, postcolonial theory, legal pluralism, and settler law.

First Nations Studies Program