

# **Women Warriors: Indigenous Voices**



Picture Courtesy of Sarah Nelson, UNBC Graduate Student

A conference hosted by:

UNBC First Nations Studies Department, Lheidli T'enneh,  
and Dakelh Elders

## **Special Considerations & Thanks**

The Lheidli T'enneh Nation

All Nations Elders

Dakelh Elders

The First Nations Centre at UNBC

Conference Volunteers

Organizing Committee

UNBC Conference Services

## **Sponsors**

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In addition, the following people provided generous support:

Department of First Nations Studies

Department of Health and Human Science

Department of Education

Office of Graduate Programs

SAGE

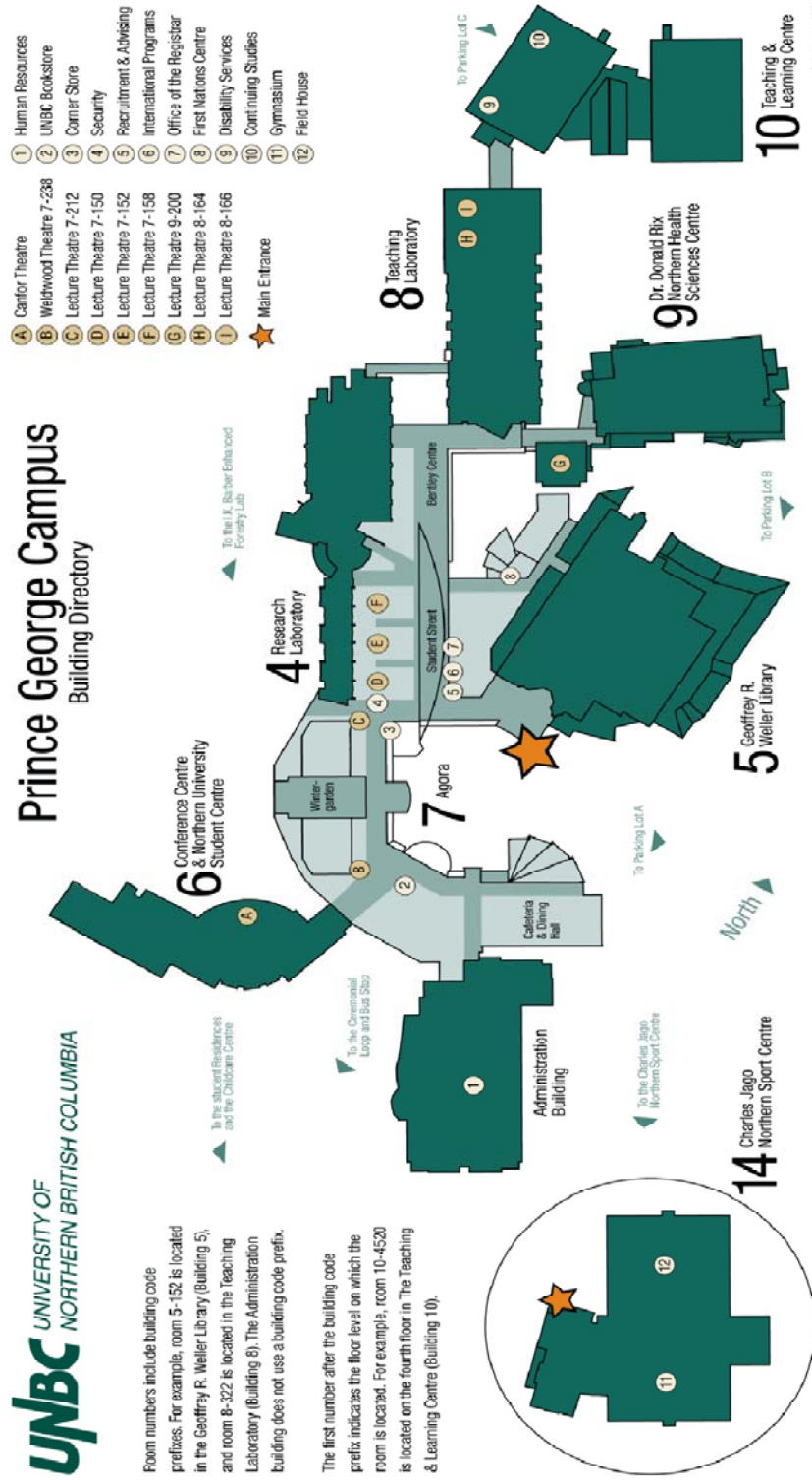
## **Catering**

Georgina Hill

Thirsty Moose Pub

Eurest

# Map of UNBC



# **Schedule of Events**

## **Sunday 11 March 2012 (NUSC Event Space)**

**4:30pm – 5:00pm**

### **Registration**

**5:00pm - 6:00pm**

### **Opening Dinner**

The event will begin with a banquet with the opening prayer and welcome done by a Lheidli T'enneh Elder.

**6:00pm – 6:30pm**

### **Introductory Speeches**

- Honouring Women Warriors. Graduate Student drummers and singers.
- Karyn Sharp, on behalf of the FNST Department, will also welcome guests and speak.
- Representative from Graduate Studies
- Toni Carlton representing UNBC First Nations Centre

**6:30pm – 7:30pm**

### **Keynote Speaker**

Dr. Val Napoleon will open as the first keynote speaker, speaking to: Rethinking the Potential of Law and Resistance

**7:30pm – 8:30pm**

### **Elders Dialogue Presentation**

## **Monday 12 March 2012**

**9:00am - 9:30am**                      **Conference Opening (Canfor Theatre)**

**9:30am – 10:30am**                      **Concurrent Presentations/Workshops:**

**6-305(Workshop)**

- I. Marian Laval and VeraLynn McDonald: "When the tides turn: Serving Indigenous matriarchal vision for institutional change."

**6-306**

- I. Shelly Johnson: "A vision of hope: Seven women chiefs of Northern BC."

**6-307**

- I. Barbara Adam-Williams: "Ned'ut'een women at the Babine Barricade Treaty of 1906."
- II. Patricia Howard & Tina Fraser: "The many faces of women warriors."

**NUSC Event Space**

- I. Karyn Sharp: Title TBA
- II. Gallery walk: Cristian Silva  
Attendees will meet in the NUSC Event Space to be taken to the Rotunda Gallery on campus to experience the art show currently on display:  
**Warmikuna Yuyaynin - Women's Memory**

**10:30am – 10:45am**                      **Coffee break (NUSC Event Space)**

**10:45am - 12:00pm**                      **Concurrent Presentations/Workshops**

**6-305 (Workshop)**

- I. Vicki Kelly: "Walking with: As vision, practice, and curriculum." With Angie Hocken, Faye Seymour, Susan McCook, Charlotte Boya, Hazel Boya & Kathy Poole

**6-306**

- I. Titi Kunkel: "Doing Indigenous research as a 'de-centred' African in the Cariboo Chilcotin region."

6-307

- I. Marilyn Iwama: "The earth is our mother: Determining metaphor in our story."

NUSC Event Space

- I. Dr. Alyce Johnson: Mnemonic Maps, Talking Landscapes

**12:00pm – 1:30pm: Lunch break**

**1:30pm – 2:45pm: Cultural Workshops (NUSC Event Space)**

- I. Traditional beading with each participant making either earrings or a bracelet to commemorate their experience at the conference.
- II. Teaching session done by a local Indigenous Elder surrounding traditional medicine pouches and herbs along with their uses. Each attendee will leave with greater cultural understanding and knowledge and they will also take a medicinal pouch home with them.

**2:45pm - 3:00pm Coffee break (NUSC Event Space)**

**3:00pm - 4:00pm Concurrent Presentations/Workshops**

6-305 (Workshop)

Moderator: Paul Michel

- I. Paul Michel
- II. Ivan Paquette: "From a holistic lens... We see the whole picture... Together we find solutions."
- III. Benjamin Laurie: "Challenging men: Empowering partners of intimate abuse."

6-306

- I. Nellie Vera Pokiak: "Two worlds, two cultures: How curiosity and strength have bridged two ways of knowing."

6-307

- I. Catherine Nolin: "'Get these monsters out of here!' Maya women's activism and resistance against Canadian mining on Indigenous lands in Guatemala."
- II. Cristian Silva & Gisela Ortiz Perea: "Huamanquiquia: Community of widows."

NUSC Event Space

- I. Sarah Nelson: Master of Arts in First Nations Studies Thesis:  
"Don't call me crazy: Re-envisioning mental health services in Aboriginal contexts in Canada"

**4:00pm - 5:00pm                      Keynote Presentation**

Dr. Paula Sherman will be the afternoon keynote speaker with artist Alanis King, speaking on: Articulating an Indigenous Research Paradigm through Performance

## **Tuesday 13 March**

**9:00am - 9:30am (Canfor Theatre)**

Conference Opening

**9:30am – 10:30 am (Canfor Theatre)**

Dr. Manulani Meyer will be the keynote speaker, speaking about: Holographic Epistemology

**10:30am – 10:45am      Coffee break (6-205/211)**

**10:45am -12:00pm      Concurrent Presentations/Workshops**

6-305 (Workshop)

- I. Cindy Charleyboy: Techniques for self empowerment

6-306

- I. Leona Nielson & Caitlin Nicholson: Traditional medicines, language and cultural education, early readers

6-307 (Workshop)

- I. Vicki Kelly, Marlene Erikson, Colleen Erikson, Shana Schwenter, Sarah John, Kim Stewart, Donna Mac Donald, & Cat Stevens: "The Place of the Arts in Giving Voice: A transformative Journey."

Gathering Place

- I. Women Leaders Session: Karen Ogen – Wet'suwet'en Chief

**12:00pm – 1:30pm Lunch break with poster viewing session**

**Posters: 6-205/211**

- I. Antonia Mills & Melissa Carlick: "Strong Yukon women come back from men."
- II. Emily Sadowski: Intuitive knowing



- III. Imani Miller: "'Women warriors' of Prince George."
- IV. Maria Orcherton: "Exploring geographical kinships and mapping landscapes of identity in the Casma Valley of Central Peru."
- V. Sandra Harris: "Wet'suwet'en social ecological framework."
- VI. Maxine Matilpi: "A Kwakwaka'wakw Reflection on an Indigenous Legal Pedagogy."
- VII. Ivy Chelsea – "Letwilc: Healing from the Heart. A Secwepemc Perspective"

**1:30pm – 2:45pm**

**Concurrent Presentations/Workshops**

**6-305**

- I. Shelly Niemi and Angela Carter "Five Learning Foci within the Aboriginal Education Department;
- II. Lorraine Naziel – "Yintah' Wewat'zenli - "Taking Care of the Land"- Wet'suwet'en Women Negotiating Empowerment"

**6-306**

- I. Victoria Baptiste, "Utilizing Technology for Indigenous Knowledge"

**6-307**

- I. Elders – Cultural Competency  
Gloria George & other Respected Elders

**Gathering Place**

- I. Honoring Women Leaders: Sophie Thomas  
Video Presentation: "The Warmth of Love, The Four Seasons of Sophie Thomas"

**2:45pm - 3:00pm**

**Coffee break (6-205/211)**

**3:00pm - 4:00pm (Welwood Theatre)**

Round table/café dialogue with all keynote speakers

**5:00pm – 7:30pm (Bentley Centre)**

Closing ceremony, dinner, and remarks

## **Letter from Dr. Ross Hoffman, Chair of First Nations Studies, UNBC**

On behalf of the Department of First Nations Studies I welcome you to the Women Warriors: Indigenous Voices Conference. A year ago a group of graduate students and faculty attended the Women's Gathering at Trent University. When they returned home to UNBC they were very keen to host an Indigenous women's conference here. After months of planning, hard work and the support of the Lheidli T'enneh, as well as colleagues from across the university, it has become a reality. I trust that our time together will be rewarding and I know that we will be enriched by the words of the local, regional, national and international speakers who will share their knowledge and experience with us.



Ross Hoffman

Chair, First Nations Studies

## **Keynote Presenters**

### ***Dr. Manulani Meyer***



Bio: Associate Professor, Department of Education, University of Hawai'i at Hilo. Dr. Meyer graduated with an Ed. D. in Philosophy of Education from Harvard University, 1998, researching Hawaiian epistemology, or an indigenous philosophy of knowledge. Since then, she has been teaching, researching, and publishing on a number of topics. Her publications include the book *Ho'oulu: Our Time of Becoming. Hawaiian Epistemology and Early Writings*.

Topic: Holographic Epistemology

This presentation will focus on the interrelatedness of all things. In ancient systems around the world there are inevitably three main ways in which to view and experience knowledge: 1) via the objective, physical, outside world, the world of science and measurement, density and force; 2) via the inside subjective world, the space of thought, mind, idea and interiority that helps understand meaning and our linkages with phenomenon; and finally 3) via the quantum world shaped by transpatial descriptors and intersections, a spiritual dimension un-linked to religious dogma, described in ethereal, mystic, and yet experiential terms: ie: All my relations; or in Science: the Implicate Order. Simply put: body, mind, spirit. Maori refer to it as: tinana, hinengaro, wairua.

### ***Dr. Val Napoleon***



Bio:

Dr. Napoleon has recently become the Law Foundation Professor in Aboriginal Justice, in the Faculty of Law at the University of Victoria. Her PhD from the University of Victoria, entitled "Ayook: Gitksan legal order, law, and legal theory," has been influential. Her many publications include a book, coedited with Cathy Bell, entitled *First Nations Cultural Heritage and Law: Case Studies, Voices and Perspectives*. Title: *Rethinking the potential of law and resistance*

Topic:

What are the ways that we might identify, articulate, and draw from the intellectual resources contained in indigenous legal traditions which are so desperately needed

for today's contemporary issues? The challenges of indigenous self-determination and citizenship generate many questions such as: How might indigenous legal traditions matter today? How might indigenous legal processes be taught and applied to today's complex conflicts and social dysfunctions? I will seek move beyond the standard conceptions of western law that negatively shape and limit the assumptions about indigenous legal traditions. I will also explore how self-determination, citizenship, and justice are a part of indigenous legal traditions and we must rethink the potential of law and resistance. To do this, I will draw on ancient indigenous stories and practical legal methodologies.

### ***Dr. Paula Sherman and Alanis King***

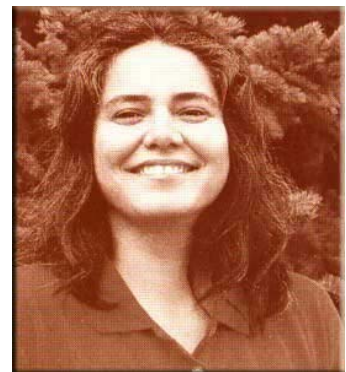


#### **Bio:**

Dr. Sherman is a tenured Professor of Indigenous Studies at Trent University as well as the director of the Indigenous Studies Ph.D. program. She served as chief of the Ardoch Algonquin First Nation, and has been an active voice against mining and resource extraction on Indigenous lands. Her publications include the book, *Dishonour of the crown: The Ontario resource regime in the valley of the kiji sibi*. Title: *Articulating an Indigenous Research Paradigm through Performance*

#### **Topic:**

This presentation will focus on performance as an Indigenous approach to the expression of historical research. Paula and Alanis will present on the Mijii-Kwis Project, a collaborative Research/Creation project funded by SSHRC and undertaken to explore the sacred narratives of Mijii-Kwis and his interactions in Omamiwinini (Algonquin) Homeland. The project is examining cultural autonomy that the sacred narratives have when envisioned through performance. Using a narrative on Mijii-Kwis created for her dissertation, Paula is working with Anishinaabe director and playwright Alanis King to develop a script and full production play in the third year about Mijii-Kwis and his return to the Kiji-Sibi (Ottawa Valley).



# **Abstracts**

## **Presentations**

### **Shelly Johnson**

Title: A vision of hope: Seven women chiefs of Northern BC

In 2001, seven elected and hereditary women chiefs created a vision of hope for the future of Indigenous peoples living in the north (see below). This qualitative research presentation discusses the historical, political and current challenges to their transformative vision, and their strategies to make it a reality.

Glorify the Creator of all things on this earth

Treat one another with respect, honesty and compassion

Provide a safe environment for all

Understand the talents of all people stand on their own only as part of a whole

Know and use the language and traditions of your culture

Educate people

Together develop ways to avoid conflicts between distinct political structures

Help young people to know about choices

Ask questions and make your government accountable to you

Expect role models to be alcohol and drug free

Understand that you can't change other people

Everyone has free will

### **Barbara Adam-Williams**

Bio: I currently live in Burns Lake, a full time mother of 6, a student, a wife, a Hereditary Chief, and volunteering my time with other women in my community.

I would like to present at the Conference Ned'ut'een Women at the Babine Barricade Treaty of 1906. We have a strong case on this and our women played a strong role in this along with the men who travel to Ottawa. We are Lake Babine Nation, and our area is around the Babine Lake area. We have about 2300 members and currently reside in 3 full time communities and 2 summer time communities.

## **Patricia Howard & Tina Fraser**

### **Bio for Patricia Howard**

Patricia Ann Howard is of Métis ancestry and is currently a Master's Student at UNBC where she is pursuing a degree in First Nations Studies. Her focus is on Aboriginal Health and the role traditional sustenance has regarding the overall health and well-being of Aboriginal people.

### **Bio for Dr. Tina Fraser**

Dr. Tina Fraser is a Maori scholar teaching at the University of Northern British Columbia. She is an Assistant Professor and the Aboriginal Education Coordinator with the School of Education, and an Adjunct Professor in the School of Nursing and First Nations Studies. Dr. Fraser is a Fellow of *Te Mata O Te Tau* (The Academy for Research and Scholarship at Massey University, New Zealand). In her previous role, she was the ActNow BC Initiatives Research Manager and the Cultural Advisor to the National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health, Centre of Excellence for Adolescence and Children with Special Needs, and the Network Environments for Aboriginal Research BC. She has a Nursing background, Early Childhood Education, Bachelor of Science; Master of Education, and a Doctor of Philosophy from the University of British Columbia. She, along with colleagues, has published articles and chapters in Early Childhood Education, First Nations and Indigenous Knowledge(s).

### **Title: The many faces of women warriors**

The faces of Aboriginal warriors have emerged throughout history effectively etching images into the minds of the young and old alike. These perceptions have shaped the way society now views the Indigenous population. Through dialogue, this interactive workshop explores traditional ways of women warriors and the contemporary notion of what constitutes a modern day warrior. Questions such as: What does a traditional woman warrior look like, stand for, do and believe in will be discussed. Additionally, some contemporary women warriors are educated, sometimes carry a briefcase and wear a suit. But what does it mean for women warriors to pick up that briefcase and put on the suit? Through pragmatic relations, negotiation and diplomacy, herstory will emerge through the interweaving of two women warriors' life stories.

## **Vicki Kelly**

With a group of 5-6 women educators, elders, and community members From the Fort Ware community

Title: Walking With: as Vision, Practice, and Curriculum

Walking on, walking with, walking beside, and walking within are all ways for the Tsek'ene people to "remember to remember" (Cajete, 1994). It is their way of actively sustaining and understanding their place and their role within it. This presentation will trace the history of Tsek'ene people, the legacy of residential schools, the flooding of much of their traditional territory, and what they have developed through unique variations of Rediscovery and Restorative Justice which values walking with others on the land to rediscover, restore, and revitalize their profound connection to the land. This practice of walking on and walking with is central to the possibility walking together on the land as a way towards honouring need for individuals to re-imagine themselves and their world in light of their healing journey. This walking on the land is a source of their indigenous knowledge and now they walk on the land as a practice that informs the ecological imagination of a curriculum that is to walk beside the curriculum currently offered in British Columbia. They are expanding the notion of schooling to include life long learning and to integrate Indigenous knowledge and pedagogical practices that are relevant to their place, their land and their development of Indigenous Voice. In this workshop we will share images, music, and stories of our walking with journey.

### **Sarah Nelson**

Title: Don't call me crazy: Re-envisioning mental health services in Aboriginal contexts in Canada

The purpose of this study was to relate differing perspectives on mental health in an Aboriginal context to how mental health services might be improved to better serve Aboriginal populations. I worked in partnership with a primary health care clinic in Prince George, whose mandate is to provide client-centred care based on Aboriginal values, and to incorporate biomedical care and Aboriginal forms of healing. The Aboriginal Caucus, a cultural advisory board for the clinic led by an Aboriginal Elder, acted in an advisory capacity to inform the research. We asked Aboriginal clients, Elders, and health care providers, "what is mental health?" This presentation will outline the process of undertaking this research and offer the preliminary results of this study.

### **Dr. Alyce Johnson**

B io: Alyce Johnson is a member of the Kaajèt–*Crow clan*, and the Tsäyda Tà–Jimmie Johnson and Á Tsqa–Emma Johnson Family. She is from the Yukon Territory and followed trails that have also led her to both the University of British

Columbia and Trent University. She has two degrees in education from the University of British Columbia, and a PhD from Trent University. Alyce grew up on the trails of Kluane Lake region, and came to understand that narratives are mnemonic maps—trails that guide us into who we are as being Indigenous to knowledge.

The title of her presentation is: "Mnemonic Maps, Talking Landscapes: Spatially Narrated Kaajèt—*Crow Clan*", which demonstrates the use of trails as an Indigenous methodology and geospatial narrative memory that retains Indigenous knowledge as living genres. With the merging of oral traditions, Indigenous knowledge, Southern Tutchone language and cartography within a narrative paradigm, maps hold more than parchment paper, for it grids the knowledge of peoples throughout a region—past, present, and future. Long ago stories hold narrative maps that Indigenous languages retain for our future Kaajèt narratives as we sing into the past as Our Shagóon—*our history*. The dimensions of time, space, peoples and landscapes merge into one collectivity known in western terms as oral traditions, and in the language of Southern Tutchone, it is Kwadây Kwańdur—*long ago stories*. These narrative genres of stories, songs, dances, and ceremonies entrench layers of Indigenous knowledge that remains a constant presence beyond archival storage and into a landscaped pedagogy of growing up Indigenous to lands.

## **Titi Kunkel**

Title: Doing Indigenous Research as a ‘de-centered’ African in the Cariboo Chilcotin Region

Defining Indigenous Research continues to be problematic. Indigenous Research can refer to studies with Indigenous Communities or conducted by an Indigenous person. The use of the term ‘Indigenous’ and its United Nations’ definition broadly relates to the descendants of First Peoples and Ethnic Minorities. In countries like Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, it is unquestionably clear that the Aboriginals/Aborigines are the First Peoples. In other post-colonial societies, such as Africa, questions arise such as ‘who is and has the right to be Indigenous?’ or ‘when does one stop being Indigenous?’ While there are no formal answers to these questions, this paper describe ‘Afrocentrism’ which is an approach taken by a ‘de-centred’ African scholar to regain cultural position within the Indigenous and mainstream paradigms. The paper also shares some outcomes from applying this approach to a Doctoral study in the Cariboo Chilcotin area of British Columbia.



## **Nellie Vera Pokiak**

**Bio:** Nellie Pokiak is from Tuktoyaktuk, NWT. An Inuvialuit Elder she lives in two worlds and draws strength from her traditional culture. She has studied criminology and counseling, and researched beluga whales out of curiosity. She is a vivid story teller and draws on both worlds to educate youth and newcomers.

**Title:** Two Worlds, Two Cultures: How curiosity and strength have bridged two ways of knowing

Tuktoyaktuk is on the Arctic Ocean; there are no trees there and everything one needs is provided by the land. As a young girl I knew that I wanted to support my family with food and clothing because the work is learned but also passed on to the next generation. Living off the land heals the mental, emotional, spiritual body but also socially with the young and newcomers. The pride instilled comes from the heart, with the ability to do the impossible at times. I studied Criminology out of curiosity. I wanted to make a difference to at least one person. The struggle to graduate proved impossible at times but great determination and power within myself got me through the three years. Using my traditional knowledge and skills has stabilized me in working with others: youth, community members and outsiders. Traditional knowledge is done through observation of tides, birth of the baby whales, erosion; I enjoy seeing the youth, scientists and elders working together. There are two worlds; the youth and elders share one world and the scientists live in another world. I have the ability to blend both worlds with my husband, children and grandchildren and with the newcomers. I am a great story teller so instill different values and traditions of how we have survived throughout the years. I am respected both by the youth and scientists.

## **Catherine Nolin**

**Title:** Get these monsters out of here! Maya women's activism and resistance against Canadian mining on Indigenous lands in Guatemala

Neoliberal development schemes of mining, oil extraction, and hydroelectric projects, are embraced by post-conflict Guatemala as the way forward on the path to democratization. At the same time, the Canadian government's pro-business, pro-mining stance, through its Embassy's activities, is shaping the very nature of the so-called "development model" for this Central American country. In this presentation, based on fieldwork in the summer months of 2004, 2006, 2008, and 2010, I highlight the ways in which the development projects pursued by Canadian-based mining companies Skye Resources, Inc. and Hudbay Minerals, Inc. among others, and facilitated by the Guatemalan state, are predicated on the reduction of Indigenous and rural populations to "bare life." Maya women in

remote communities and large urban centres are actively resisting their “legal abandonment” and working for the safety and well-being of their communities in various ways including taking legal action through the Canadian legal system.

### **Cristian Silva & Gisela Ortiz Perea**

Title: Huamanquiquia: Community of widows

The twenty year period beginning in 1980 saw many families in Perú affected by the violence of the internal armed conflict. The victims of the violence were rural, Indigenous and poor. 15 000 people were disappeared and their remains have not yet been recovered. The degree of violence in the community of Huamanquiquia specifically, and its impact on women has been both emotional and physical, however women have been able to transform their pain and trauma into forms of strength. Taking control over crops was one outlet for empowerment, and coming to terms with years of grief. The Peruvian Forensic Anthropology Team (EPAF) has been working with communities such as Huamanquiquia to document cases of forced violence as a means of recovering loved ones and retrieving the remains. This assists communities in gaining a sense of closure, and asserts their rights as equal citizens of Perú.

### **Leona Nielson & Caitlin Nicholson**

Bio: Leona Nielson is a cultural and language teacher. She teaches the Cree language at the University of Northern British Columbia and language and culture at the Cree Aboriginal Head Start in Prince George. Caitlin Nicholson is an author/teacher and UNBC alumni of the Masters Arts (First Nations Studies program).

Themes: Traditional Medicines, Language and Cultural Education, Early Readers  
This presentation/workshop will focus on Leona’s medicine teachings in the Prince George community including the use of the picture book “I Help” translated and inspired by Leona and her teachings, and written and illustrated by Caitlin Nicholson (MA UNBC), about Leona’s teachings about traditional medicines to youth in the Prince George Cree Head Start and the relationship between Elders and children as values are transmitted within this process. Participants will also put together a medicine pouch that they can take home.

## **Marilyn Iwama**

Bio: Marilyn Iwama was born and raised in a Saskatchewan Cree, Saulteaux, Metis and Mennonite family. Her scholarship and poetry attend the construction of identity - especially what happens when individuals and communities integrate different worldviews. Marilyn is particularly curious about the healing aspects of food and language.

Title: The Earth is our mother: Determining metaphor in our story

Some say that, for Indigenous peoples, “the Earth is our Mother” is not a metaphor. The literal truth of that claim may seem obvious: we come from earth and return to it. But our stories of how we came to, and how we walk on the earth are who we are. The Elders also say that every story is---(just?)---a metaphor. This presentation considers metaphor’s ubiquitous disruption of Western scientific notions of evidence and objectivity. It places “evidence” alongside the truth of metaphor in Indigenous story, thereby realizing each narrative’s interconnected, transformative potency.

## **Victoria Baptiste**

Bio: Growing up in a culturally enriched environment, surrounded by fluent speakers of the nsilxcen language Victoria chose to pursue a career in Digital Media. She was exposed to language and culture since an early age and has an above average understanding of technology. She combines both skills on a regular basis and is an award winning Independent Multi-media producer and mentor.

Title: Utilizing Technology for Indigenous Knowledge

With the ever increasing popularity of technical careers in Indigenous communities and the fear of losing valued information from Knowledge Keepers, Victoria noticed many technical projects breeching cultural protocols. This workshop introduces the art of combining the two worlds together and introduces a template to ensure the 'creator' of these projects maintains Indigenous protocols while utilizing technology for Indigenous Knowledge.

This workshop was created through the En’owkin Centre’s Indigenous Studies: Foundations and Frameworks course by Victoria Baptiste.

## **Lorraine Naziel**

Title: Yintah' Wewat'zenli - "Taking Care of the Land"-Wet'suwet'en Women Negotiating Empowerment

I am a resilient, Wet'suwet'en woman warrior, educated as a geographer with a strong desire to create innovative and culturally appropriate approaches to empowerment for women and their families. Wet'suwet'en women have long dealt with intergenerational trauma associated with colonization to present day. This violence against women comes in many forms and presents itself in many ways. In my research, I aim to articulate the history of Wet'suwet'en women, integrate my story, and identify issues and research concepts to guide the development of social solutions and culturally appropriate strategies. These strategies will be holistic in nature and strongly linked to land and culture. Action at the front lines plays a critical role in understanding where to go from here. Women in leadership roles will be purposively chosen to give their voice from each of the 13 house groups and all five clans. My research will determine if there is a link between empowerment, identity and the aspect of Yintah' Wewat'zenli - "Taking Care of the Land" as we reclaim our gendered roles in Wet'suwet'en society.

## **Workshops**

### **Marian Laval & VeraLynn McDonald**

Title: When the Tides Turn: Serving Indigenous Matriarchal Vision for Institutional Change

We are serving with much urgency and solidarity the vision of the Tsimshian matriarchs of Northwest BC to strengthen their unique vision for broad institutional change and culturally authentic places of learning. By invitation of the matriarchs, we join in raising the alert and add academic credibility for language revitalization, social justice, and community healing. Our session will show examples of responding to this call to leadership through community involvement, research, and special projects. We will facilitate a dialogue about these complex collaborations and how we can move into deeper institutional change and personal transformation. Surrounded by imposing tides of social upheaval, together we learn to navigate the strength of these powerful forces rather than resist them. Humbled by the courage of our local indigenous warrior-women, we too are learning the benefits of fluidity and becoming better institutional partners.

### **Cindy Charleyboy**

Bio: Alumni Member of UNBC & Education Coordinator with the Soda Creek Band. Grad 2006, Bachelor of Arts, Major in First Nations Studies, Minor in English. Cindy is part Tsilhqot'in, Secwepemc and Norwegian from the Interior of British Columbia and has over 10 years experience working with and empowering First Nations students. Having previously worked with the Cariboo Chilcotin Weekend University and currently working as an Education Coordinator with the Soda Creek Indian Band, Cindy has developed daily practices combining traditional and contemporary knowledge to deal with some of the harsher issues we face, such as racism within the classroom.

Title: Women Warriors Techniques for Self Empowerment

Students deserve to be encouraged in all areas and empowered to deal with harsher realities, such as racism, in a positive and proactive way. Learn fast, practical techniques that can be used daily to empower yourself and others, helping you work with intention and create the positive change you want.

**Vicki Kelly, Marlene Erickson, Colleen Erickson, Shana Labatch (formerly Schwentner), Sarah John, Kim Stewart, Donna Mac Donald, Cat Sivertsen**

Title: The Place of the Arts in Giving Voice: A Transformative Journey In this workshop we will perform a Métissage of: life writing, dance, poetry, music, visual art and photography. We explore the intersection of four themes: the arts as a place of inquiry, the pedagogy of place, Indigeneity, and the transformative journey of seven women in a Masters of Education in Art Education at Simon Fraser University. In this presentation we weave the narrative threads of a powerful emergence of identity and vision through the honouring of our lived curriculums of: finding face, finding heart, and finding foundation (Cajete, 1994). We describe the pedagogy of place and the environmental and spiritual ecologies we come from. We speak lyrically of witnessing a process of giving voice through an immersion in the aesthetics of vulnerability enacted and embodied in the arts as a place of inquiry. We share some of our experiences of journeying along the pathway of transformative learning in the academy. And we celebrate the visions we carry as women who 'look to the mountain' (Cajete, 1994) and speak of how we enact this imagining as leadership in our daily lives. After our performance we will engage in a dialogue with those present addressing the emergent themes of the presentation and conference.

**Shelly Niemi & Angela Carter**

Title: Aboriginal Education Department - School District No. 57

This workshop will focus on Aboriginal Education from a local perspective and what School District No.57 is doing to infuse Aboriginal Ways of Knowing into classrooms and curriculum. You will be given an overview of the Aboriginal Education Department of School District No.57, and the Five Learning Foci within the Aboriginal Education Department; Elders and Indigenous Knowledge, Restitution and Restorative Practice, Rediscovery and Traditional Environmental Knowledge, Youth Leadership and Culture and Language. We will discuss with you the Framework of these five learning foci and how they are attached to a family of schools and how they have become part of our pillars of Aboriginal Education for School District No.57. Throughout this presentation we will discuss the importance that Aboriginal Women have within each of these foci and how

traditional knowledge is being transferred to our students from these knowledge keepers.

## **Ivan Paquette**

Bio: Thank you for allowing me to come into your world and introduce myself. My english name is Ivan Paquette, while my cree indian name is "Muskisiew Napiew" meaning "Eagle Man". I have been working with aboriginal peoples since 1983. My first job after high school with aboriginal people was in Prince George as a recreation leader in an area called the hood, VLA. In 1985 I moved to Vancouver to persue my dreams as an actor and a singer songwriter. It wasn't until 1989 that I found an agent to assist with my entertainment career. I found success on television series and movie sets becoming part of ACTRA, which is an actors union. To name a couple of these were Mcgyver, Black Stallion, and auditioning for movie roles such as a Uncas in Last Of The Mohicans. In 1991 I moved back to my roots in Prince George from Vancouver to write songs and develop as an artist. In 1992 I stopped into the Friendship Centre and was asked if I was interested in being a role model for youth in a program called Reconnect. I agreed to a year and ended up staying 6 years until 1998. It was during this time I grew as an artist and studied holistic health.

Title: From a holistic lens...we see the whole picture...together we find solutions With this workshop I hope to bring a cultural approach to family values and tradition. This workshop will include a balanced view with woman being leaders in their homes and community, supported by the involvement of men working and communicating together to find solutions for healthier families.

## **Benjamin Laurie**

Bio: Ben Laurie finds meaning in the plants and animals he lives with and eats. Currently working through a graduate degree in Social Work Ben works through a downtown Prince George counselling centre and facilitates a men's group. Ben's family mostly lives on vancouver island, however he has been living in Anishnaabe territory in southern Ontario for about 8 years.

Title: Challenging Men: Empowering Partners of Intimate Abuse

Healthy men can be a positive social determinant of women's health. By working with men in Prince George through the northern John Howard society women partners are better able to be agents of change in their intimate relationships. The men's group is accompanied simultaneously by a women's group. Each partner engages in their own group experience, taking responsibility for their actions, while understanding the maladaptive behaviour as an expression of unidentified primary emotions. Through the 15 week group therapy process men begin to explore and communicate the emotions behind their anger. Disrupting reactive interpersonal patterns through self awareness men are better able to engage in non-abusive ways with their partners, children, and friends. The group experience is rich, supportive, and honest space for men to define and live a new masculinity that serves their own health, women's health, and community health.

## **Cultural Workshops**

### **Leona Neilson, Medicine Pouches**

Teaching session done by a local Indigenous Elder surrounding traditional medicine pouches and herbs along with their uses. Each attendee will leave with greater cultural understanding and knowledge and they will also take a medicinal pouch home with them.

### **Jennifer Pighin, Traditional Beading/Feather Earrings**

Traditional beading will be taught in this session with each participant creating a piece of jewelry to take away from the conference.



## **Poster Presentations**

### **Antonia Mills & Melissa Carlick**

Title: Strong Yukon women come back from men

Yukon stories of rebirth highlight the strength and equality of women, who often remember shifting gender between lives. Two Yukon Elder women recall being male in their last life: one was Adzaah. He came back/was reborn as Angel Carlick, named Angel because she brought back his spirit, and the birthmarks of the bullet entry and exit wound which she carries still as an 81 year old. Angel is proud of being a good hunter and trapper and good at snaring: a strong capable woman who refused to let her youngest son go to Residential School. Elder Stella Boss remembers being the son of Annie Ned and Elijah Smith in her last life. While some Yukon rebirth examples don't change gender between lives, they often do: Annie Ned's second husband came back as a girl. These women are in essence women warriors working strongly to maintain the strength of their traditions.

### **Emily Sadowski**

This presentation highlights the importance of developing a relationship with the inner knower, intuition. Intuitive intelligence can be fostered in both educational and everyday life settings when it is given the space and time to unpack itself. Drawing on the work of Gregory Cajete and Manu Meyer, as well as a Jungian understanding of individuation and wholeness, a 'pedagogy for intuition' is aimed at developing self-authority and confidence in the inner knowing that is all of our birthright. The pedagogy itself is two-fold; paying attention and letting go are its paradoxical directions. It incorporates ideas about worldview, ways of knowing, and the transformative potential of developing a meaningful relationship with intuition, which strengthens leadership capabilities by expanding the pool of resources from which we draw.

### **Imani Miller**

Who are the "Women Warriors" of Prince George and on line on Facebook? What is it? A program developed for and by women for self empowerment. An introduction to how and why we got started.

## ***Maria Orcherton***

Title: Exploring geographical kinships and mapping landscapes of identity in the Casma Valley of Central Peru (South America)

Social work as a profession historically advocates that communities deserve self-determination, cultural sustainability and social justice. This research examines the social, cultural and spiritual planting practices of the Casma people of Peru regarding their native cultivar Apichu/Kumara/Camote (A/K/C) (*Ipomoea batatas* L.) or sweet potato. For Indigenous/Mestizo families of the Casma Valley of Peru, A/K/C represents the symbolic reflection of preserving communal knowledge, rituals, languages, traditional agricultural practices, teaching and learning practices. This is also a way of protecting community-base in terms of autonomy, empowerment; provisioning them against the clutches of modernity, rampant change and progressive acculturation. This research provided an in-depth look at cultural sustainability and how the Casma people have become resilient over time. Qualitative ethnographic methodologies were used to explore the socio-cultural and spiritual planting practices of the Casma people. Results showed that traditional planting practices, rituals, and ceremonies are becoming extinct and many farmers fear that associative knowledge (to these practices) has been lost forever. The sustainability embedded in the revitalization of A/K/C, traditional "ways of knowing" are considered to be one of the adaptation strategies to help Indigenous/Mestizo families and communities to become resilient to the impacts of climate change, food insecurity and poverty. Findings will contribute to the understanding of problems and policies in developing countries such as Peru and improve ways of bridging knowledge gaps between Western science and Traditional science, particularly in the field of social work. Within the contemporary social work context, and reflecting on what needs to be accomplished in this study, international solidarity is needed and is well highlighted in the ethical guidelines of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW); Ethical Responsibility to the Broader Society. Data gathering was done by incorporating farmer transect walks, semi structured questionnaires, informal oral narratives, focus group discussions and informal family gatherings.

## **Ivy Chelsea**

Title: Letwilc: Healing from the Heart. A Secwepemc Perspective.

Ivy Chelsea is from Esk'etemc of the Secwepemc Nation. She is a Graduate student in the UNBC Master of Arts program and completing her First Nation Arts Master's degree. Her Master thesis focuses on the Secwepemc perspective of her relationship between the spirituality identity of engrossed with the Secwepemc language. Her home community of Esk'et, formerly called Alkali Lake Indian Band, took the lead in the sobriety movement in 1970's. Ivy shares her perspective on the strengths of the Esk'et people on their road to sobriety in a fifteen year period from 1971 – 1985.

## **Organizing Committee**

Jessie King, Graduate Student, PhD Health Sciences, Lead Coordinator

Sarah Nelson, Candidate for MA in First Nations Studies, Coordinator

Patricia Howard, Candidate for MA in First Nations Studies, Coordinator

Lorraine Naziel, Candidate for MA in Interdisciplinary Studies, Coordinator

Dr. Ross Hoffman, Associate Professor & Chair of First Nations Studies

Dr. Antonia Mills, Professor, First Nations Studies

Dr. Tina Fraser, Assistant Professor, Education

Dr. Alyce Johnson, Assistant Professor, First Nations Studies

Dr. Henry Harder, Associate Professor & Chair of Health and Human Science

Karyn Sharp, Lecturer, First Nations Studies

Gina MacDonald, Administrative Assistant

## **Places to Stay in Prince George**

### ***Coast Inn of the North***

**A conference rate is available here; please tell them you are attending the Women Warriors: Indigenous Voices conference when you make your reservation.**

Address: 770 Brunswick Street, Prince George, BC, V2L 2C2

Phone: 250-563-0121

Fax: 250-563-1948

Email: [info@coasthotels.com](mailto:info@coasthotels.com)

Website:

[http://www.coasthotels.com/hotels/canada/bc/prince\\_george/coast\\_innnorth/overview](http://www.coasthotels.com/hotels/canada/bc/prince_george/coast_innnorth/overview)

### ***Ramada Prince George***

Address: 444 George Street, Prince George, BC

Phone: 250-563-0055

Fax: 250-563-6042

Email: [reservations@ramadaprincegeorge.com](mailto:reservations@ramadaprincegeorge.com)

Website: <http://www.ramadaprincegeorge.com/>

### ***Esther's Inn***

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Phone: 250-562-4131

Toll Free: 1-800-663-6844

Fax: 250-562-4145

Email: [info@esthersinn.com](mailto:info@esthersinn.com)

Website: <http://www.esthersinn.com/>



University of Northern British Columbia

3333 University Way

Prince George, BC

V2N 4Z9