

# LIVING INDIGENIZATION ENGAGEMENT PROTOCOLS & GUIDELINES



OFFICE OF  
INDIGENIZATION  
**JIBC**






Content for Living Indigenization: Engagement Protocols & Guidelines, Heather Saranczak and Jason La Rochelle, Justice Institute of British Columbia.

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Since the beginning of time, Indigenous Peoples across the globe have thrived on lands in an intimate respectful relationship with all our relations. Health and flourishing of these Nations depend on sophisticated and complex social, cultural, economic, and political systems. Indigenous ways of thinking, being, relating and doing are as diverse as the Peoples they represent. Here at the Justice Institute of British Columbia (JIBC), we recognize and respect the diversity and distinction of First Peoples. All land, waterways, and skies are Indigenous. We commit to deliberate actions that support the full implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and other legal and strategic frameworks that respect and protect Indigenous human rights, safety, and well-being. This work, like a celestial constellation, is made possible by the coming together of multiple sources of energy.

The Office of Indigenization at the Justice Institute of British Columbia introduces employees to the true history of Canada and helps shift values and attitudes and create hospitable conditions and environments that nurture an Indigenization process in every aspect of Institutional life. Only by Living Indigenization can JIBC lead progress and change towards Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation. This guide provides a clear vision on engaging with the Office of Indigenization to support this work and illustrate culturally responsive ways of working together. We invite your commitment and collaboration grounded by the root values of Living Indigenization: Respect, Cultures, Relationships, and Truth and Reconciliation. Social justice is viable for all when work and each other is cared for and stewarded in a good way.

**JIBC OFFICE OF INDIGENIZATION**





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**CAROLINE BUCKSHOT**  
Algonquin Nation



**PHILLIP GLADUE**  
Métis Nation



**LARRY GRANT**  
xʷməθkʷəyəm (Musqueam) Nation



**KEN PRUDEN**  
Métis Nation



## MESSAGE FROM THE ELDERS-IN-RESIDENCE INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT

In an ever-increasing multicultural society, post-secondary institutions, in what today is called Canada, must examine their policies and practices, and ask themselves if all our relatives are accessing and benefitting from their service to society? As Resident Elders of JIBC, we recognize and revere the inherent belonging and place of all our relations. Within education systems and beyond we know that this view is not fully held. It is our work to instill this belief as a foundation for coming together and to make whole that which currently remains incomplete: Higher education.

We do not need to look far to understand the dangers of the single narrative or the predicament we all find ourselves when we remain steadfast in the exclusion and denial of others' humanity in the interest of perpetuating a colonial agenda. Such distortion rationalizes graveyards in supposed school yards. Or institutionalized racism that reduces cultural difference to deficit and inferiority. Creating an environment in higher education where we serve the interests of a global community necessitates the immediate

relinquishing of autocratic ways, replacing them with beliefs, actions, and character that restore and enhance community. This is a strong starting place for Indigenous engagement and the shared goal of living Truth and Reconciliation.

As you familiarize yourself with this guide, we encourage you to be attentive to your mind, body, heart, and spirit. All parts of ourselves must be engaged to fully connect with our relatives, living and non-living. We also encourage you to receive this guide as an invitation. Wherever we go, we are on the lands of our Indigenous ancestors that have lived here for millennia. We are in a season of deep repair and renewal – a rehumanization of the grandest scale because of the fiction of human separation. Othering and social categorization are normalized and requires a full transformation, first within the self, and then in a journey of relationships.

The Office of Indigenization and the Elders-In-Residence Program are committed to sharing this journey with you. As the adage says, "Nothing about us without us." We are here for the change and to learn from each other. Just as our ancestors have always done, and as Mother Earth instructs us, caretaking of knowledges is a vital way we take care of each other and our communities.



# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

## LIVING INDIGENOUS WAYS AND LIVING INDIGENIZATION AS STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AT JIBC



Hello and warm greetings.

As President and CEO of the Justice Institute of British Columbia (JIBC), I wish to thank the First Peoples of the unceded, Traditional lands on which JIBC is situated. I also offer my gratitude to the many Indigenous leaders and communities who have helped shape my leadership and direction as a guest-visitor to these Indigenous Nations. To our Elders-In-Residence, Indigenous Advisory Council, and staff of the Office of Indigenization, I thank you for building a relationship with me foremost, and for generously gifting me with your wisdom, counsel, and leadership so that I can continue to grow my ability to uphold JIBC's important work to live Indigenization.

Indigenous engagement is not optional, nor should it be. As our Elders clearly express,



“ Indigenous engagement is not optional, nor should it be ... Learning how to work effectively with Indigenous Peoples is essential to our success”

unity is the way Truth and Reconciliation are made possible. I value our candid conversations and critical discourse. It takes this and much more to embark on an evolutionary process of Indigenization and to learn what Truth and Reconciliation means for a public post-secondary institution uniquely responsible for preparing the justice, health care, and public safety professionals who serve our communities.

Throughout my career, I have gained valuable insights from my personal journey to support Indigenization and the broader calls for Truth and Reconciliation. Guided by JIBC's Living Indigenization Plan and our strategic plan key commitment of Living Indigenous Ways of Thinking, Being, Relating, and Doing, I am committed to supporting the transformation of Indigenous experiences at JIBC, mindful of the potential for a greater social justice impact beyond education and training.

Learning how to work effectively with Indigenous Peoples is essential to our success and I thank you for joining me in making this a priority at JIBC.

**LEN GOERKE**  
President and CEO





# WORKING EFFECTIVELY WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES: ROOT VALUES OF LIVING INDIGENIZATION

At this point in time in British Columbia, there exists an opportunity for greater partnerships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples across society. However, there is half a millennium's worth of history on Turtle Island that validates the hesitancy, caution, resistance, or refusal among Indigenous People to engage in colonized systems such as education. As such, it is upon all people of settler heritage to transform the way engagement with Indigenous Peoples is done so that new respectful, reciprocal, reverent, responsible relationships are built and sustained (Archibald et al., 2019; Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001; Sumida Huaman & Martin, 2020).



A history and ongoing reality of colonization necessitates that all relationships need intentional attention and care. We ask our fellow colleagues to recognize that within the rich diversity and distinction that exists among Indigenous People, and the responsibility to be informed by the voices of those Indigenous Peoples you engage, that there are protocols and practices conceptualized through Living Indigenization that engender relational safety, respect, and well-being for Indigenous Peoples. Being culturally responsive means knowing who you are working with and the context so that you carry yourself through engagement in ways that are safe. While this work is not fully reflective of all cultural perspectives on relationship building, it offers starting points and ways to help work together in a good way towards JIBC's institutional goals for Indigenization and for advancing Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation.

Within the post-secondary context and unique positionality of JIBC as a justice, health care, and public safety educator, we interact with Indigenous Peoples in every facet of our existence. We work on stolen Traditional or Treaty Territories and have a responsibility to foster a respectful relationship with the First Peoples of the lands we are on. We serve Indigenous learners in all campuses and across many communities in the province. We work shoulder to shoulder with Indigenous colleagues, internal and external. We are privileged by the leadership and love shared by Elders-In-Residence and all respective Indigenous educators that so generously share their knowledges to the benefit of a learner.



## STARTS WITH RESPECT

Based upon our collective lived experiences and motivated by our observations and close understanding that Indigenous Peoples are among the least respected of citizens throughout society and within all colonized systems, we start by acknowledging that beginning a relationship with Indigenous Peoples starts with respect. As Indigenous Peoples are seldom afforded agency and say over various aspects of their lives, including in education, it is our desire to challenge and change this socio-political phenomenon by concentrating on its root causes, starting within the public post-secondary realm, to help raise awareness of this social injustice and to defend Indigenous agency, self-determination, dignity, and respect.

Before this important work can begin, we come in a good way and situate ourselves, introducing our Office as individuals from different Nations, heritage, and disciplinary and educational pathways and outlooks that have been shaped by living our Truths. It is within this spirit of transparency that we invite you to begin a relationship by first looking at yourself and your story. Only by knowing who you are, where you come from, and who you belong to, can we start an honest relationship. This work begins first by having an honest relationship with ourselves. During an Office of Indigenization-led workshop, Knowledge Holder Elaine Alec (Sylx and Secwepemc, lives in Kamloops, British Columbia, Canada, personal communication, May 5, 2021) said, "To create



a safe space, you have to be a safe space.” Respecting all others and especially Indigenous Peoples, necessitates locating yourself within the colonial project and taking stock of how you have been raised and socialized and how your ways of thinking, being, doing, and relating contribute and uphold the very ideologies, structures, and systems that are to the detriment of oppressed and marginalized people. You might find that you too are among citizens on the fringes of dominant society. What you learn about yourself within this context matters to how you show up in relationship with Indigenous People. Being truthful about your positionality extends the potential to hold a space respectful of the differences you discover. From an Indigenous perspective, the concept of All My Relations teaches us that without all we are not whole and that we need each other to flourish and thrive. Having respect for Indigenous People is to honour the sacredness of Indigeneity and the humanness we represent in the web of life.

Coming from a place of reverence creates a heart space and mindset that inspires respectful engagement with Indigenous Peoples. Each Indigenous person and community practices unique protocols that govern interrelations and request for cooperation. It is important to know and understand the protocols of the Peoples whom you are engaging. Taking responsibility and doing research to find out if and how Indigenous Peoples and communities want to engage is essential.

The Office of Indigenization (OI) expects to be treated with the same respect shown to any Indigenous person and community and takes responsibility for carrying themselves to the same ethic. We are Indigenous People, and our Office is an extension of Indigenous body. JIBC has a strategic commitment of “Living Indigenous Ways of Thinking, Being, Relating and Doing” and to the legal imperative to harmonize with the British Columbia Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (BCDRIPA) among all seminal Indigenous human rights frameworks. At a minimum, the OI needs introductions to work done at JIBC in pursuit of these strategic directions. While it is not realistic nor always necessary for the OI to be doing this work, being informed of, and invited at the beginning stages of Indigenization efforts is necessary. Like all Indigenous People, it is up to the OI’s determination if, how, and to the extent our Office will be involved. This position is upheld by the Elders-In-Residence.

Indigenization across JIBC is a collaborative, reciprocal commitment. Engagement and Actions are both led by the OI and all employees of JIBC. Respectful relations between all involved are what makes Indigenization possible.

## SUPPORTED BY CULTURES

Since time immemorial (the beginning of time), Indigenous Peoples live in every corner of the globe and their ways of life in relationship with their respective environments are codified through laws, ethics, and socialization passed on through generations. According to Amnesty International (2023), globally there are “76 million Indigenous people” from “more than 90 countries” belonging “to more than 5,000 different Indigenous peoples” who “speak more than 4,000 languages,” making up “about five per cent of the world’s population” (para. 1). In Canada, the Indigenous population is constitutionally recognized as three distinct groups: First Nations, Inuit, and Métis, who likewise comprise five per cent of the country’s total population (Statistics Canada, 2022). Within these broad categories exists extensive diversity and distinction of Indigenous Peoples clearly demonstrated by the more than 70 different Indigenous languages spoken across Canada, “over 600 different First Nations,” “four regions and 50 communities of Inuit Nunangat,” and various groups across the country representing the Métis Nation (Statistics Canada, 2022, para. 1).

As there is no one way to be Indigenous, it is important to always conduct Indigenous engagement from a place of acknowledging Indigeneity; that is, Indigenous ways of thinking, being, relating and doing, as a continual process of learning about Indigenous cultures and cultural traditions and practices. As cultures are the embodiment and expression of unique civilizations, there is a gift of learning how others view life and the human experience. Being open in mind and heart to a variety of perspectives deepens understandings and give us new meanings to create a much richer, fuller picture on any facet of life. In the



context of education, when we share diverse worldviews and experiences, we explicitly lift plurality and communicate the valuing of all Peoples, Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike.

A distinctions-based or lands-based approach to working with Indigenous Peoples recognizes the physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual connection of First Peoples to specific lands and the simultaneous history of colonization. Within this history, also exists a migration of Indigenous Peoples and a normalization of migration across the country and urbanization of Indigenous Peoples. Given this duality, engaging with Indigenous Peoples needs to account for variance in Indigenous representation while at the same time, be an impetus for learning with specificity about whom you are engaging with.



## SUSTAINED BY RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships are the life force of Indigenization. The relational process begins with oneself because working with others in a good way means taking responsibility for the energy you share. As Resident Elder Phillip Gladue teaches, we must not take before we give. Respectful relationships require reciprocity. We must carry ourselves in a way that honours the life of another. As stewards of all creation this is an Indigenous way. Sometimes this belief is made visible through protocols like offering tobacco or gifts when asking for assistance and providing compensation with respect to work done. Just as in nature, if people take too much of anything, what has been there, will no longer be. In human interactions, we need to tend to relationships with the same care and attention.

As depicted by the colourful orbs in the root system of the symbolism for Living Indigenization, we are relative to all of creation. All that is, is interconnected and interdependent for sustainable flourishing. Humankind is a part of the web of life. The natural order provides clear instructions that, to advance the health and well-being of people and communities and to achieve goals that help us to attain optimal states of being, we too rely on the relationships we share and nurture. Our existence and growth are not in isolation but connection. Bringing these Teachings into an Institutional environment and within a context of Indigenization, we know that we are in this work together. Indigenization is led and sustained by employees of colonized systems for the benefit of all. Each person is as important as the next to Living Indigenization. Roles, responsibilities, knowledge, and operational areas are different and contextualized, but all are interrelated and contributing to the strength and vitality of the whole system. To undergo a process of Indigenization is to be mindful and intentional of inviting and including diverse representation in work so all have the opportunity to contribute to a fulsome process and results.

JIBC knows of the significance of relationships. We exist because of the relationships we have with our core clients and the commitments we keep in preparing a future workforce in justice, public safety and health care. Indigenization and a duty to Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation amplifies and emphasizes a greater network of relationships we must foster and at the same time, the responsibility to learn about the relationship Indigenous Peoples have had and still do, to Canada, the Crown, its entities and all public servants that play an active role in the oppression and violence towards Indigenous Peoples and communities, and especially targeted populations, Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2S+ Peoples. This work calls for sustained relationships that are honest, healthy, and safe. There is no other way.







## STRENGTHENED BY TRUTH & RECONCILIATION

There is no respectful, honest, safe relationship with Indigenous Peoples in the absence of Truth. Truth is not limited to one topic or aspect of history or life but the totality of what it means to be Indigenous. Imagine being asked to live a life as someone else. To speak a foreign language, believe different beliefs, to think, be, and do in ways that are out of alignment with who you are. Colonization is a violent force that dispossesses Indigeneity, attempting to split our spirit and remove us from everything that is us – our identity, families, communities, ways of life, land and more. Truth is knowing the terrorism that has been sown for generations. Truth is knowing that despite this genocide, Indigenous Peoples are still here thriving as we have done for millennia.

We are the most resourceful, adaptive People on the planet and among the most benevolent, peaceful, and humanitarian. We have survived manmade and natural devastation and have risen to soar to great heights even though we face colonialism and its many faces of human degradation. To know this is the beginning of a journey in the light of Truth.

Reconciliation is a debated concept and critiqued as language of the oppressor, not the oppressed. To many people Indigenous and non-Indigenous, apologies and remuneration for historic atrocities of colonial policy policing Indigenous body, children, families, and communities is not Reconciliation. Some critique the concept

of Reconciliation for the absence of a relationship between Indigenous Peoples and Canada in the first place, therefore there being no relationship to reconcile. Still others require honesty and Truth-Telling as the basis for moving forward in the Nation-to-Nation relationship. Every Indigenous person has their views on this history and contemporary matters. All perspectives are lived Truths and are to be respected. It is certain and factual that regardless of where personal belief lands on Truth and Reconciliation, there has been and continues to be, control and subjugation of Indigeneity based upon colonial and religious supremacy and privilege. A hard Truth, but Truth nonetheless. All Canadians, irrespective of place in society, share this Truth and an obligation to their fellow humans and humanity, to disrupt any and all ideologies, patterns, and structures that prevent equal access to the same fundamental human rights as anyone else.

JIBC, as both a post-secondary institution and an extension of justice, public safety and health care fields, has more responsibility and obligations towards advancing Truth and Reconciliation than the general public because we train and prepare professionals who to this day, still control, subjugate, and police Indigenous body with dire consequences. No other can be an instrument of social justice and change in the relationship with Indigenous People than JIBC in the lands we reside with the influences and responsibilities we assume. Concepts and practices of Truth and Reconciliation are thus uniquely tied to the fabric of what constitutes JIBC and its vision and mission, and we must reconcile between this reality and what must be transformed to result in new lived experiences for Indigenous Peoples and all people. This is a Truth for JIBC and must be a starting place for safe and healthy relationships with Indigenous Peoples and the foundation for Indigenous engagement at JIBC.







## CLOSING MESSAGE

In closing, be ready and come prepared for discussion, collaboration, and idea generation. As we evolve as an institution around Indigenization, Decolonization, and Reconciliation, the discussion evolves. To continue to move forward, we must raise the bar of expectations regarding one's own knowledge of Indigenous approaches and worldviews. Building a trusting relationship with the Office of Indigenization is requisite. We can share in a collective liberation as we all increase our knowledge and understanding.

Courage, commitment, and accountability are essential ingredients. To move beyond words, we need to align values with practice. Thoughts and feelings are important; however, what we need now is action. We invite discourse. It will not always be comfortable for any of us, yet we can push through and make the progress we all need. What we profess to value as an institution must be demonstrated in action. Ultimately, if we keep in mind that we share many of the same goals and strive for similar outcomes, we can collaborate and make progress individually and institutionally.

Starting, building, and fostering relationships is essential.

### **JASON LA ROCHELLE**

Director, Office of Indigenization



# GUIDED STUDY

## ENHANCING PRACTICE AND SKILLS FOR INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

Working safely and effectively with Indigenous Peoples and Communities necessitates lifelong learning and experiences grounded in diverse representations, an anti-racism and equity lens, and perspectives of Indigenous Peoples locally and globally. We recommend the following Teachings as entry points for this journey:



Scan the QR code to access these digital resources.



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JIBC's six campuses are located in New Westminster, Maple Ridge, Pitt Meadows, Chilliwack, Kelowna and Victoria on the unceded Traditional Territories of the Qayqayt, Musqueam, and Coast Salish Peoples, the Katzie and Kwantlen First Nations, the Stó:lō Nation, the Sylix/Okanagan Nation, and the Traditional, Treaty Territories of the Songhees, Esquimalt, and WSÁNEC Nations.