



# Partners in Innovation

Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation

*Partners in Innovation highlights how UBC – through its research, community engagement and teaching – is working with and supporting BC's government initiatives. Each edition identifies existing collaborations and new areas of research and discovery that may be of use to Ministers and senior public servants within the ministry.*

## FACULTY OF APPLIED SCIENCE

The **Faculty of Applied Science** offers programs in engineering, nursing, architecture, and landscape architecture. Researchers and students from all units within the Faculty are working in collaboration with Aboriginal communities to address challenges facing them. Students at both the Okanagan and Vancouver campuses are connecting with Aboriginal youth through Youth Engineering Workshops, designed to introduce children in grades 6-9 to the field of engineering. Meanwhile, a unique program through the Norman B. Keevil Institute of Mining Engineering is enhancing students' understanding of First Nations culture by placing them in First Nations communities and at adjacent mine sites for a four month work term. Students have worked with the Stk'emlupsemc First Nations Community and at the New Gold mine; in the Tlicho community and at the De Beers project at the Snap Lake mine; and in the West Moberly First Nation at Walter Energy Western Coal. There the students provide a link between the community and the mining company while at the same time gaining practical experience related to mining.

### PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

#### Linking Culture and Health

UBC researchers and community partners are working together to develop a model for local and sustainable health policy and practices that will integrate Western and Indigenous knowledge to create responsive and effective health programs and services. **Drs. Helen Brown, Gladys Macpherson, and Colleen Varcoe** from UBC's School of Nursing, along with community-based partners, **Vera Newman and Barb Cranmer**, of the 'Namgis First Nation in Alert Bay, have been working with the Kwakwaka'wakw peoples in the region through a program of research that investigates the inseparability of culture and health. Their current study targets two of the most vulnerable populations in the region, Elders and youth. The overall goal of this community-based participatory research is to build and sustain community ownership and leadership in health intervention strategies.

To learn more about these and other innovative partnerships, please contact the UBC Office of Government Relations at [partners.innovation@ubc.ca](mailto:partners.innovation@ubc.ca) or visit <http://governmentrelations.ubc.ca/partners-in-innovation/>.



## PARTNERSHIP POSSIBILITIES

### eMentoring

Aboriginal youth are significantly under-represented at post-secondary institutions, in particular in the health sciences; one UBC program is hoping to change that. In September 2011, **Dr. Sandra Jarvis-Selinger** and UBC's [eHealth Strategy Office](#) launched their new [eMentoring program](#), an online program that matches Aboriginal middle and high school students (grades 6-12) with post-secondary health science students across BC. The mentors work with their mentees for at least a year, participating in semi-structured online discussions and activities. Sandra, an assistant professor in the Department of Surgery and associate director in the eHealth Strategy Office, hopes that the CIHR-funded eMentoring program will encourage Aboriginal students to consider careers in the health sciences and will provide them with the support, knowledge, and confidence to succeed in high school and during the transition to post-secondary education. "It can be too late in Grade 12," says Sandra, "If they've decided that biology or chemistry aren't their cup of tea, they probably haven't kept their options open for considering a health science career. eMentoring is really about giving those options back, keeping the potential open and offering these students the chance to positively impact their lives."

### Aboriginal Family Literacy

In a partnership with Human Resources and Skills Development Canada and the Aboriginal Head Start Association of BC, **Dr. Jan Hare**, an associate professor in the Faculty of Education, has developed a curriculum for staff and early childhood educators engaged in designing, implementing, and evaluating Aboriginal family literacy programs in Aboriginal early learning settings. Nearly 75 participants from Aboriginal Head Starts in BC and across Canada have taken part in the Aboriginal Family and Community Literacy Curriculum (AFCLC) training program. The training is comprised of six, eight-hour online learning modules and three eight-hour face-to-face training sessions, focusing on family literacy, early literacy, parent and community engagement, and effective communication, where Indigenous approaches to learning are at the core of the curriculum. The project is an example of a successful collaboration with Aboriginal communities and organizations and is enabling these groups to build their capacity to provide programs and services for Aboriginal people that build on Indigenous knowledge systems and learning processes.

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***The University of British Columbia appreciates the generous support and vision provided by the Province of British Columbia. It is through this valuable partnership that UBC is able to maintain its position among world-leading research institutions and attract talented individuals to BC; individuals who help drive the economy in our region and promote innovative thinking through research and application to benefit all British Columbians.***