



Journeying Together

A transformative approach to Indigenization
and internationalization at NIC

NIC Office of Global Engagement



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Re-envisioning Global Engagement Together

We are grateful to all who contributed their voices to *Working Together*, NIC's *Indigenization Plan* which provides the values and principles to guide us today.

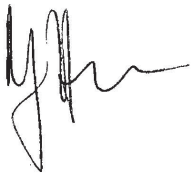
This, our first Indigenous-serving Internationalization plan, places Indigenous students, employees and their communities at its heart and will shape and guide our work for many years to come. It also provides a place to reflect and reshape the learning and experiences of visiting international students, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, many of whom come from colonial systems with different histories and responses to those histories [1].

As we begin the journey of re-envisioning global engagement, we have glimpses of many possible futures, but no reference point to ground us. Our story begins with seeing the walls that have been built up around us through our current colonial education system and hearing ways we may embark upon a better future together.

At North Island College (NIC), we acknowledge and understand that unravelling the impacts of colonization will span generations and that we are wholeheartedly dedicated to our role and shared responsibility in the process of meaningful reconciliation.

The weaving of Indigenization and internationalization will be a transformative process undertaken carefully and mindfully as we discover new ways to evolve and act on our commitments in *Working Together* and in *Widening our Doorways*, NIC's academic plan. The goals herein serve simply as our shared starting point, from which conversation and exploration will grow.

Today, we acknowledge and thank all who will share, learn and walk alongside us in the coming years as we reimagine our future for Indigenization and internationalization together.



Mark Herringer
Executive Director, Global Engagement



Kelly Shopland
Executive Director, Indigenous Education

Weaving Indigenization and Internationalization

The 35 First Nations that make up the region where NIC is located have been engaged in international activity for millennia—whether that be through complex trade and sociocultural interactions among nations along our vast coastline or engaging with visitors from far outside the region. In more recent history, intercontinental relationships were formed with colonial visitors and settlers. Today, international engagement continues with global partners who are striving to become Indigenous-serving educators. In essence, the values of internationalization have been deeply rooted in Indigenous ways of knowing and being since time immemorial.

INTERNATIONALIZATION

Internationalization of education integrates international, intercultural and global relationships into the teaching, learning, research and core services of an institution. It aims to elevate attributes of openness to and understanding of other worldviews, systems, ways of knowing and being, empathy for people with different backgrounds and experiences, and the capacity to value diversity [2].

INDIGENIZATION

Through Indigenization, “Indigenous knowledge systems become naturalized in education, making them respectfully evident in the places, spaces and classroom environments.” As a commitment, this “requires recognition that Indigenous worldviews have been significantly affected or overlooked and therefore require restorative processes. Indigenization is not simply including Indigenous content; it requires utilizing a different approach to learning entirely,” one that ensures that Indigenous ways of knowing and being are woven equitably and seamlessly across our institution. Furthermore, “Indigenization calls upon us to create environments across our campus that support weaving together the distinct knowledge systems so that learners, faculty and staff come to understand, appreciate and mutually respect one another [3].”

TOGETHER AS ONE

Our vision of weaving Indigenization and internationalization is rooted in NIC’s collective commitment to become a truly Indigenous-serving institution, toward a future reimagined for the well-being of this generation and those yet to come. Our goal is to leave a legacy of hope that aligns with the beliefs and aspirations of the Indigenous people and communities we serve.

A Transformative Approach

“Exploring the concept of what it means to be truly Indigenous-serving will be key to our transformation [4]” in support of *Widening our Doorways* 6.1, initiative 1. Our new challenge calls upon us to open our minds and hearts to being Indigenous-led and advancing innovative pathways we cannot yet envision [5]. The following strategies offer a shared approach to cultivate dialogue and learning, from which we can grow.

COMMITMENT TO INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

Decolonization is equally important for citizens of Canada, as well as for the visitors who come to study in Canada, many of whom hope to become future Canadian citizens. It is important to completely understand the truth about the history of Indigenous people, the history of Canada and the legacy of colonization and oppression that has occurred in Canada [6] and across international borders. Understanding how Canada is changing today will make us all better citizens, locally and globally.

Our commitment is steadfast in our responsibilities to uphold:

- The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action;
- The application of Colleges and Institutes Canada Indigenous Education Protocol;
- The adoption of the guiding elements of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;
- Considerations of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and their application within the college and our community;
- The promise to identify ways to respond to a uniquely Canadian challenge to decolonize this land;
- The commitment to reveal foundational barriers embedded in our college systems, reform new pathways and rebuild an educational environment together that ensures inclusion and success for all learners.

We are bringing students here from all around the world and they are coming to the land that belongs to Indigenous people since the beginning of time. Our institutions have systemic racism and discrimination built into them. We need to decolonize to ensure that everybody's voice is respected and reflected and elevated and advocated for, including international students.

— Kory Wilson, Indigenous Initiatives & Partnerships, BCIT

IN-COMMUNITY INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE

The Office of Global Engagement, together with the Office of Indigenous Education, will create space for in-community dialogues to support *Working Together's* guiding Indigenization principle “nothing for us without us [7].” Together we will help to build understanding with local Indigenous communities, spark interest in international activities through NIC and explore how these communities can be involved in building and expanding opportunities. Possible in-community dialogue themes could include: becoming partners in international/Indigenous learning; exploring relationships such as international students as visitors and immigrants; international student engagement in reconciliation; Indigenous faculty and student international exchange development, among others.

The Indigenous Education Council is pleased to support this thoughtful and inspiring plan, which places Indigenization at the core of international education at NIC.

— Brent Ronning, Education, Employment & Training Manager
Huu-ay-aht First Nations

GLOBAL LEARNING CIRCLES

The Office of Indigenous Education, Elders, Centre for Teaching, Learning & Innovation and the Office of Global Engagement will support a series of dialogue circles to encourage students and employees to safely explore international education and Indigenization at NIC. The circles will include support and direction of Indigenous voices and will be guided by the UNESCO 'Story Circle' methodology outlined by Darla Deardorff and other methods. The circles will have participants explore Indigenous and international perspectives to reflect on suggested teaching and learning practices that will support the development of classrooms free of marginalization for all learners. This series will provide space for all participants to share their insights for creating inclusive learning environments.



BEGINNING OPPORTUNITIES

There is much work to be done, both in preparing for international students and in weaving meaningful partnerships and experiences that support NIC Indigenous students, employees and community engagement internationally. Imagined opportunities to explore include, but are not limited to:

- Academic/cultural study abroad with Indigenous or non-Indigenous focus;
- Global classroom connections with students around the world;
- New partnerships with Indigenous-serving institutions around the world and exchange/recruitment relationship development to attract Indigenous students to NIC;
- Connections for engagement of NIC Indigenous Elders, faculty, students and communities with international students in our 'Global Place' through building an understanding of place-based learning in a global environment;
- Guided participation of international students in local Indigenous activity events such as National Indigenous People's Day, National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, supported visits to Indigenous communities and activities at the Q̓ə pix ʔidaʔas Indigenous Gathering Place in Campbell River;
- Expanded orientation programming designed to include a deeper introduction to local First Nations' (Indigenous) culture and history;
- Student sharing circles; and
- Explorations of what it means to be an internationalized Indigenous-serving institution.

During the virtual exchange, it was very eye-opening to see that Indigenous people in a different country have so much in common with people in Canada. It gave me a deeper understanding into the human condition and was really uplifting to know that many people share the type of change we want to see in the world.

— NIC student, English 096



As part of a virtual exchange in 2022, Indigenous students from Canada and Costa Rica participated in an online course with a colleague from Tecnológico de Costa Rica. We included oral Indigenous literature from both Canada and Costa Rica in the curriculum, allowing the students to explore similarities and differences in both countries. The students felt empowered that they had this growing Indigenous community around them.

— Laura Johnson,
Faculty Member,
English and
Indigenous Education

GUIDELINES FOR ENGAGEMENT

CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATORS

NIC has committed to the Climate Action Network for International Educators accord as a way to apply more sustainable environmental solutions in the work we do in international education. Today, international engagement at NIC is being built with many global partners, including those who are striving to become Indigenous-serving institutions. As signatories to the accord, we will consider our environmental impacts at all levels of our activity and change practice in a responsible and considered manner in alignment with *BUILD 2026, NIC's Strategic Plan*.

UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The Office of Global Engagement will align appropriate operational activity in relation to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, which are an urgent call for action

by all countries, developed and developing, in a global partnership.

The SDGs provide the Office of Global Engagement with a framework to consider how to ensure the work we do contributes to making a better, more sustainable world.

We will apply appropriate SDGs to operational planning processes and regularly review our activities to ensure awareness and understanding of how we are responding to our commitment to these goals.



Embracing Possibilities, Connecting Globally

At NIC, we welcome engagement, exchange and partnerships with a growing number of countries around the world. Through diverse experiences and cultural initiatives, students and employees can choose from a wide range of opportunities to connect and engage globally.

AMERICAS

USA/MEXICO

- Incoming/outgoing student exchange
- Degree completion
- Field school
- Indigenous activities

BRAZIL

- Incoming/outgoing student exchange
- Faculty exchange
- Indigenous activities

CHILE

- Incoming/outgoing student exchange
- Institutional partnerships
- Employee exchange

COSTA RICA

- Virtual Indigenous exchange
- Indigenous field school (proposed)
- Faculty exchange

AFRICA

KENYA

- Institutional development project

TANZANIA

- Leave for Change

EUROPE/UK

BELGIUM

- Incoming/outgoing student exchange
- Incoming student researchers
- Virtual exchange
- Faculty exchange

DENMARK

- Institutional partnerships

FRANCE

- Incoming/outgoing student exchange
- Double degree (Business)
- Faculty professional development

GERMANY

- Incoming/outgoing student exchange

IRELAND

- Institutional partnerships
- Degree completion
- Faculty professional development

NORWAY

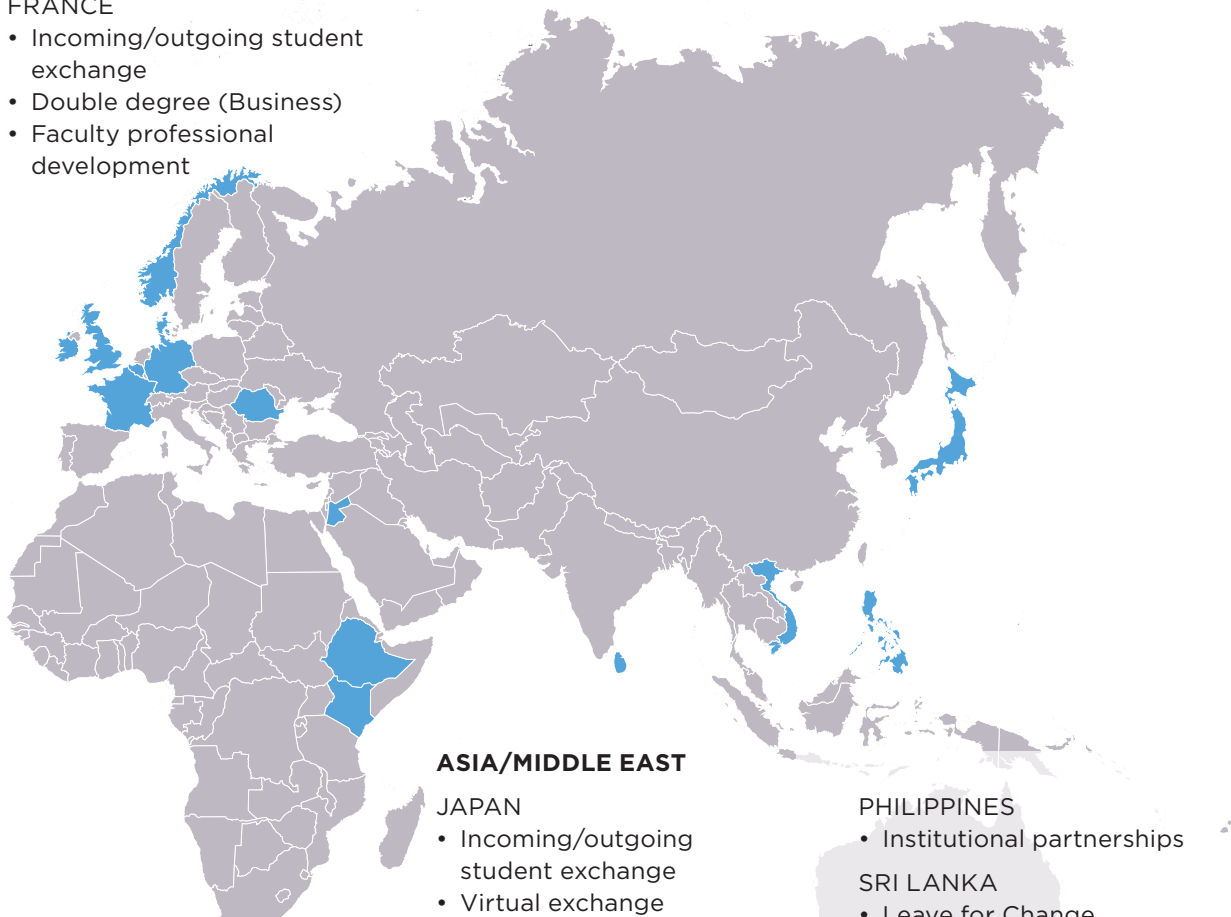
- Institutional partnership

SCOTLAND

- Institutional partnership
- Degree completion

ROMANIA

- Incoming/outgoing student exchange
- Faculty exchange



ASIA/MIDDLE EAST

JAPAN

- Incoming/outgoing student exchange
- Virtual exchange
- Field school (proposed)
- Indigenous activities

JORDAN

- Field school

PHILIPPINES

- Institutional partnerships

SRI LANKA

- Leave for Change

VIETNAM

- Institutional partnerships
- Employee exchange



Service Pillars

On our shared journey to advancing innovative pathways and weaving Indigenous-serving approaches into practice, students remain at the heart of all we do. Together, the Global Engagement team will listen, share and support this plan and its evolution over the years to come. Through the following service pillars, they will be strongly positioned to support student success, from application to graduation and building on our collective vision at NIC to “deliver BC’s best individualized education and training experience [7]”.



RECRUITMENT AND ENROLMENT

Build and strengthen global relationships and lead international recruitment and enrolment. Further establish processes to support a diverse community of prospective students, applicants and recruitment partners.



GLOBAL EXPERIENCE

Enhance student and employee international study, work and research through virtual and physical mobility. Grow partnerships, projects and opportunities to engage with local, Indigenous and international communities.

We have so much to learn from each other about how to promote Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing within Western academic institutions for the betterment of our communities.

— Louise Pagotto, Chancellor of Kapi’olani Community College,
University of Hawaii



INTERCULTURAL ENGAGEMENT

Integrate global perspectives, cultural understanding and empathy into the teaching, learning and service functions of NIC. Develop and enrich resources and opportunities to support engagement with students and employees. Engage with communities to celebrate and share local Indigenous and international cultures.



INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SUPPORT

Connect with international students at each stage of their journey, from application to graduation, to support and enrich the student learning experience and student success. Build connections between international students and local Indigenous communities.

Welcoming Renewal

At its core, this plan provides a blueprint for a transformative Indigenous-serving approach to international education at NIC. The plan also continues to build on our ongoing success in providing exceptional learning and services for visiting students, increased opportunities for local students to learn internationally and enhanced international engagement activities for employees. To achieve these, NIC will focus on these four service pillars that outline our goals.



RECRUITMENT & ENROLMENT

We will attract successful international applicants to NIC campuses and communities.

Specifically, we will:

- a) Renew international enrolment through an established, sustainable international enrolment and service model (See: *BUILD*, Global Learning 1).
- b) Diversify international enrolment through active and consistent outreach to recruitment partners and establish sustainable student communities from each NIC region.
- c) Engage prospective students, applicants and recruitment partners in location-specific and student-centred content prior to arrival.
- d) Collaborate to develop the NIC brand strategy to reach international communities.

Even before my first day as a student, everyone at NIC wanted me to succeed. Whether I was taking classes digitally or on campus, in Canada or in my home country, it didn't matter. There are so many resources available here.

— Casey Caldwell, Business Administration post degree diploma in Global Business Management student



GLOBAL EXPERIENCE

We will enable the NIC community to develop the international knowledge, skills and experience needed to succeed. We will actively collaborate with Indigenous communities and learners to engage more deeply in building international relationships and connections.

Specifically, we will:

- a) Further develop and integrate international and intercultural learning at NIC (See: *Widening Our Doorways*, 6.1 initiative 3; *Working Together* Action 8,10).
- b) Utilize strategic approaches to enhance partnership agreements, international projects and international experiences for students (See: *BUILD* Global Learning 3; *Working Together* Action 10).
- c) Inform and support continued development of new and adjusted programming in a variety of credential types that supports both local and international student learners (See: *Widening Our Doorways*, 6.1 initiative 5; *Working Together* Action 8).
- d) Develop clear pathways, together with the Office of Indigenous Education, to support Indigenous student, faculty and community engagement internationally (See: *Working Together* Action 8, 9, 10).
- e) Establish a communication/advocacy strategy engaging students, employees, local, provincial, national and international organizations, governments and government agencies with NIC's opportunities and challenges as a public rural BC college in the international education environment.

The most inspiring realization I had in this course was through the Costa Rican (virtual) exchange. I really enjoyed our time learning about them and their ways, but especially how the Indigenous Costa Rican women are doing so much for their communities and going back to their ancestral teachings.

— NIC Student, English 096



INTERCULTURAL ENGAGEMENT

We will collaborate with the NIC community to build an understanding of intercultural fluency and empathy.

Specifically, we will:

- a) Initiate collaboration with the Office of Indigenous Education to develop intercultural aspects of NIC's first Indigenizing International Education Plan (See: *Widening Our Doorways* 6.1 initiative 1; *Working Together* Action 8, 9, 10).
- b) Engage in active and collaborative dialogue with students, faculty, departments and the institution about global learning experiences at home and abroad, with a focus on opportunities addressing environmental and social justice challenges (See: *Widening Our Doorways* 6.1 initiatives 2 & 4).
- c) Engage with Centre for Teaching & Learning Innovation (CTLI), North Island Students' Union (NISU), North Island College Faculty Association (NICFA), Centre for Applied Research, Technology & Innovation (CARTI), Department Chairs Working Group (DCWG) and other departments, including Trades and Technical programs, and committees as appropriate to integrate global perspectives, cultural understanding and empathy into the teaching, learning, research and service functions of NIC.





INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SUPPORT

We will connect with and support international students from application to graduation to enhance their living and learning experiences, and success.

Specifically, we will:

- a) Enrich the learning environment (See: *BUILD*, Global Learning 3) through meaningful and relevant student services and supports.
- b) Assess specific needs of trades students and faculty.
- c) Embed Indigenous cultural learnings to support international student settlement and engagement (See: *BUILD*; *Working Together*).
- d) Advocate for systemic immigration reforms that serve the needs of NIC and local communities.
- e) Build relationships with local organizations, cultural communities, employers, municipal government organizations and school districts to further student opportunities.



Re-imagining the Journey

The Indigenizing of our internationalization process at NIC will extend well beyond the duration of this plan and will require us to create an open space to support dialogue and change. As we weave our shared confidence, understanding and trust together, we will learn ways to build new stories of international education at NIC for the benefit of students, employees, communities and our emerging world.

We will build sustainability into the work we do. This will take many forms as we consider how financial, community, partnerships and environmental elements related to international education at NIC can be leveraged and applied to support students' changing world.

We will work to deliver on our commitments to all students to support the development of programming that increases their opportunities for success as NIC students, alumni and community members. We will do this by building strong and equitable enrolment processes; new and innovative international learning opportunities; new programs; and innovations for delivery and strong employer relationships.

Sixwala, sixwala, 'na'malala, 'na'malala. Sixwala, t'seḷa, sixwala, t'seḷa. Ha'nata xan's galgapota.

Paddle, paddle, as one, as one. Paddle, bail, paddle, bail. Let's persevere and support one another.

— Sarah Child (Kwak'wala)

E lauhoe mai na wa'a; i ke ka, i ka hoe; i ka hoe, i ke ka; pae aku i ka 'aina (327)

Everybody paddle the canoes together; bail and paddle, paddle and bail, and the shore will be reached.

— Mary Kawena Pukui (Hawaiian) [8]



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KWAK'WALA

Hesta'lis k̓ak̓ut̓as

The place for learning all over the world

AYAJUTHEM*

ʔuk'w̓st ʔot q'a't̓^h t̓w̓sem

We have all come together to learn

LIQ'WALA

Histeʔlis q̓aʔulas

Global learning

NUU-CHAH-NULTH

hišumyił nanaaʔičił ʔaʔa

We are all learning what we need to do

*Unofficial