

## **CONTINUING EDUCATION AND TRAINING (CET)**

### **Report to the Board of Governors**

*Submitted by Julian Benedict, Project Lead, Regional CET Officer, Helen Van Spronsen, Lorraine Hagan, CET Program Officer & Community Liaison, Leanne Moore, CET Program Officer & Community Liaison.*

### **Greenhouse Propagation & Production**

The Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District (ACRD), Hupačasath First Nation, and North Island College (NIC) have partnered to deliver a Greenhouse Propagation and Production course from February 18 to March 27, 2025 for 12 students. This initiative prioritizes food production skills for both Nation members and greenhouse workers in the Alberni Valley.

The program, funded by a Community Workforce Response Grant from the Province of British Columbia, aims to supply the labor market with skilled workers for entry-level positions. Graduates will gain the knowledge needed to secure employment at local greenhouse businesses or start their own.

NIC will provide instruction for both the in-class and hands-on portions, hosted at the Hupačasath Community Farm greenhouse. The program will offer lectures and practical experience in plant physiology, hydroponics, and sustainable agriculture, preparing participants for careers in horticulture and agriculture.



### **Wildfire Crew Member Training**

We are currently preparing a CWRG application in partnership with Tseshah First Nation to offer Wildfire Crew Member training at the Port Alberni campus from June 4 – 25.

### **Online Courses**

Enrollment for online courses such as WHMIS, Transportation of Dangerous Goods, and Ed2Go remain strong and provide valuable certification for employment.

### **NEW! Solar PV, HVAC Home Remediation**

Port Alberni has been designated a “Transition Community” due to the recent closures of sawmills, which have significantly impacted many residents, resulting in job losses. In response, the City of Port Alberni, in partnership with CET-NIC, was successful in receiving a Community Workforce Response Grant to launch a new program: the SolarPV, HVAC, and Home Remediation Program. Starting February 24, 2025, this 10-week program, which has enrolled 10 participants, aims to equip individuals with foundational skills in photovoltaic (PV) solar panel installation, household mold and hazardous material remediation, and HVAC system installation. The course emphasizes safety, hands-on training, and adherence to industry standards, preparing participants for careers in renewable energy and environmental systems maintenance and installation. Additionally, the program serves as a stepping stone for further training in the Electrical, Plumbing & Heating and HVAC Trades.



### **Applied Rural & Indigenous Community Economic Development Micro-Credential Program**

The Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills awarded North Island College funding to develop a micro-credential program to help create more skilled workforces that will promote economic resilience and support the current and future needs of rural and Indigenous communities.

The program is an NIC-led joint venture with six other participating public rural colleges. NIC has formed an advisory committee to engage with local communities, industry experts, and First Nations to build a program and curriculum plan that best aligns with the visions and needs of those communities. The curriculum development will commence this spring with the first program projected to be offered in fall 2025.

### **Comox Valley Campus**

#### **NEW! Activity Assistant Certificate Program Expects to Partner with Two BC Colleges**

The North Island College Activity Assistant Certificate continues to be the preferred program for hundreds of students across the province annually. The Spring 2025 cohort (May start) is already over 50% full, as NIC anticipates a new partnership with two BC Colleges that will invite their HCA grads to take our program to expand their professional skills. More details will be announced shortly. Employment in this field remains very robust, with many participants being offered conditional employment positions even before they have completed their studies. NIC will be

applying to have this program covered under the Future Skills Grant (FSG) this Fall, if the funding program returns.

### **Animal Care Aide Program Returns to CV Campus this Fall**

After successfully delivering this program online for the last 5 years, the NIC Animal Care Aide program is returning its paws to the Comox Valley campus – with full in-person delivery beginning in October 2025. The instructor is hosting a special in-person Program Information Session on Wednesday, April 9, 2025 at CV campus – which has already been moved to a larger room to accommodate a large number of registrants. To learn more and apply online for the Fall 2025, visit: [www.nic.bc.ca/animal-care](http://www.nic.bc.ca/animal-care).

### **NEW! Small Business Fundamentals Program Completes First Program this March**

This intensive online program covers the core skills of creating, managing and expanding your own small business in Canada. Main topics include strategic planning, day-to-day operations, risk mitigation, marketing, employee recruitment and financial management. Our curriculum also covers best practices in reporting, insurance, liability and protecting your intellectual property. The program ran its first cohort in early January 2025 ending on March 1 with support from the Future Skills Grant (FSG). Due to its popularity, Continuing Education hopes to offer it again this Fall 2025. For more information, visit: <https://www.nic.bc.ca/programs/continuing-education-and-training/vocational-training/small-business-fundamentals/>

### **Advanced Digital Marketing with AI Integration Expanding Offerings this Spring**

This 12-week program is designed to prepare students for a sustainable career in digital marketing with the latest in Generative AI. Students will learn the fundamentals of targeted market segmentation, audience analysis using GAI tools, and crafting modern pitches to effectively communicate digital marketing stories. The program has scheduled its offerings under the Future Skills Grant (FSG) for several years now, but due to demand, it will be running a special unfunded cohort in May 2025. For more information and a full schedule, visit: <https://www.nic.bc.ca/programs/continuing-education-and-training/vocational-training/advanced-digital-marketing-with-ai-integration/>

### **First Aid program decentralization**

In the end of 2024, a full review of First Aid courses was done, looking at the data of sections scheduled, run or cancelled over the past ten years. First Aid instructors and Continuing Education Program Officers were consulted, and their feedback was taken into account as a full year plan was drawn up as a guide to future scheduling in all campus locations. Sections and marketing have been scheduled according to this plan as of April 2025. In the first stage of decentralizing First Aid programming, local CEPOs will now take on the marketing of First Aid sections being offered in their own locations. Scheduling, contracts and general marketing will continue to be done from the St Joe's campus.

### **Craft Brewing Foundations**

The current cohort of Craft Brewing Foundations is well underway with 13 students. It is being run with online lectures three evenings a week and a practical, in-person component each weekend. Students within the Comox Valley region meet with instructor Adam Chatburn in different breweries, and students beyond the local area attend an approved brewery local to them for intern work.

The poster features the NIC logo at the top left. The main text reads: "DID YOU KNOW... that NIC offers high quality First Aid training?". Below this is a photograph of a person in a white shirt and blue gloves practicing first aid on a mannequin lying on a table. At the bottom, it lists "First Aid for: RECREATION, MAINTENANCE, CHILD CARE, HEALTHCARE, CONSTRUCTION". A QR code is in the bottom right corner, and contact information "Phone 250 334 9005 Email: firstaid@nic.bc.ca" is at the bottom right.

**Youth Academy**

Youth Academy is in the planning stages with many leaders and assistants from previous years requesting to return in 2025. We hope to run up to 23 sections this year, extend our outreach to offer a camp in either Port Hardy or Sointula and to offer subsidized camps on-location at two local First Nations. Camps offered will be Lego Robotics, STEM, Coding and Fine Art.

**Board Game Development and Design**

We have developed a GENI course in Board Game Development and Design in partnership with local businessman and entrepreneur, David Leverton, creator of the board game Dice Hockey Challenge. Students will learn the basics of board game design with a deep dive into the business skills needed in order to present a board game to a global market.

**Campbell River Campus****Marine Training**

Marine training enrolments are picking up after the winter season, with strong marketing ahead of fishing seasons. The expectation is that registrations will continue to come with courses running close to, if not at capacity. Contract requests are coming in regularly, including an ongoing contract in Whitehorse and a newly revived contract at Williams Lake.

**Metal Jewellery Design**

The 2024-25 cohort continues to do well as they move towards the completion of their program in April with a graduation event being planned for April 17, 2025. This group of Metal Jewellery Design Certificate students will be the last for the certificate program as it is being suspended for 25-26. However, a new series of micro-credentials with newly created courses will be launched very soon for Sept 2025 enrolment.

Weekend workshop jewellery classes have been well attended. New offerings in the works for late April & early May.

**Campbell River Elder College**

ElderCollege welcomed several new Course Leaders and hopes to see course offerings continue to grow. Memberships are strong and continue to grow. We expect another successful term. Soon, efforts will look ahead to Fall of 2025.

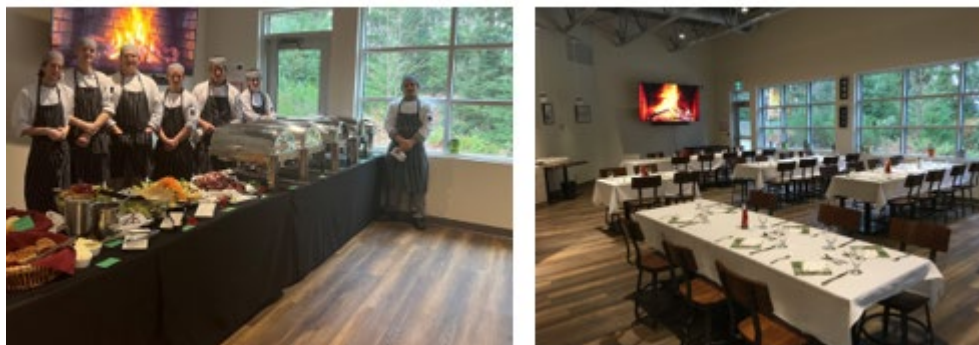
**TRADES AND TECHNICAL PROGRAMS****Report to the Board of Governors  
April 2025**

When we left off in November, we were seeing the final curtain call on the colors of fall as the trees lost the last of their multi-colored shrouds, laid bare in stark contrast to the simple beauty of the autumn kaleidoscope. Temperatures dipped warranting the need for cozy sweaters and warm scarves as the all too familiar unfailing winter rains set in once again.

The end of November and the beginning of December brought together the Trades and Technical programs' faculty who dedicated their time to renew our Program Advisory Committees (with support from Erik Hardin (carpentry) and David Johns (CTLI). Carpentry, Heavy Mechanical, Electrical, Culinary, Plumbing, Automotive, Welding and Metal Fabricator all took part in lively

discussions around what the programs offer, changes within industry and how to productively move forward.

Chef Xavier Bauby and his Professional Cook students opened the Bistro for another successful and popular fall service while Chef Jonathan Frazier was preparing his new cohort of Professional Cook level 1 students for an impressive buffet for the Office of Global Engagement and International students on December 4<sup>th</sup>.



This was but a warmup for the incredible yearly holiday buffet that hosted over 130 hungry guests who were not disappointed and cannot be credited with any weight loss on December 12<sup>th</sup>. Diners had their choice of 5 cold salads including Crunchy Asian Salad, Roasted Fingerlings Potato, Beet and Corn salad with Lemon & Chives and Market Fresh Grilled Vegetables with Balsamic Herb Dressing followed by the main entrees of Oven Roasted Duck Breast with Orange Gastrique, Fish Ballotine with Lobster Velouté, Squash Baked in Herbed Tomato Sauce & Asiago Cheese and more. Then if you waddled on over to the Carving Station you found Roasted Beef with Cabernet Sauce and Portabella Wellington with Roasted Cherry Tomato Sauce. Not full yet? Well, there were also Mennonite Style Dinner Rolls and a choice of Yule Log or Carrot Cheesecake. If we didn't need a treadmill before....



*Side Note: Did you know the Bistro opens up for the Spring service on April 24<sup>th</sup> – June 5<sup>th</sup>? Do you want tickets? So sorry, we're **SOLD OUT!***

You know we have top notch culinary instructors when North Island College's Culinary program makes it into the **TOP 30** of best culinary schools in Canada according to University Magazine! NIC is lauded for its hands-on training and innovation, along with attributes such as integrating sustainability into the curriculum. Congratulations Chefs!

After we cruised through the holiday break and belted out the last verse of Auld Lang Syne, January 2<sup>nd</sup> came sneaking up fast and it was back to business. Trades and Technical Programs came into 2025 going strong with apprenticeship programs in Carpentry levels 2&3, Heavy Mechanical Level 4, Plumbing Level 4 and new Foundation intakes in Electrical, Carpentry and Automotive.

No signs of slowing in February either with more apprenticeships in Electrical levels 3 & 4, Heavy Mechanical level 2 and Carpentry with levels 2 & 4. Accompanying these intakes were Plumbing, Heavy Mechanical and Welding (along with continuous entry apprenticeship levels) foundation programs along with not one, but two Trade Sampler intakes accommodating 33 students anxious to find their perfect fit in the demanding trades industry.

March takes us to Plumbing Apprenticeship level 3, Electrical Apprenticeship level 1, Automotive Service Technician Apprenticeship level 2 and a Professional Cook 2 in Campbell River and another at the Rogers Street training kitchen in Port Alberni. Then we thought, “why not, let’s throw in another Electrical Foundation program just for fun”!

April and May bring apprenticeships in Electrical level 3, Heavy Mechanical level 3, Carpentry levels 1 & 3, Plumbing Level 4 and Metal Fabricator Level 2.

Are you keeping count? In addition to these new intakes there were and still are carry-overs from 2024 fall in Automotive Service Technician and Welding foundation-Campbell River and Port Alberni, Furniture Design and Joinery foundation in Port Alberni, Carpentry Foundation in Courtenay, Electrical, Heavy Mechanical and Fabricator-Welder foundation as well as our Coastal Forest Technology Diploma students in Campbell River.

### ***Special Features***

#### **Seaweed Production and Processing Micro-Credential Program Pilot Delivery Paris Gaudet, Program Officer | Faculty of Trades and Technical Programs**

On January 6, 2025, twelve students began a 9-week journey to learn about the seaweed industry. From an introduction to seaweed, to regulations and harvesting practices, and business commercialization, the program offered students a breadth and depth of knowledge to prepare them to work in this emerging sector. In addition to a field trip to the Klahoose First Nation kelp farm and beach walks, 24 industry speakers joined the class virtually and in-person to argument curriculum and provide valuable industry-based insight and technical data about the seaweed industry. Throughout the pilot delivery, students and industry held an active role in evaluating learning modules and activities to inform further program development and the alignment of programming with sectorial needs.

The culmination of the program was a Seaweed Showcase on March 7, 2025, that provided students with the opportunity to share reflections and present their seaweed business ideas. Industry partners, funders, instructors, NIC colleagues and leadership joined to celebrate student achievement and discuss next steps.

**Photo credit: Island Life Photographs**



**Trade Sampler 2025 – Mike Androschuk, Coordinator — Trades and Technical Programs**

The NIC Trade Sampler program has undergone a significant and highly successful restructuring, resulting in increased student capacity and enhanced program efficiency. By implementing a dual-cohort system, with morning and afternoon sessions, we have effectively doubled our student intake, now serving 32 (with one special case totaling 33) aspiring tradespeople, compared to the previous 16. This expansion allows us to extend valuable trade skills training across multiple trades, with core concentrations on Carpentry, Electrical, Cabinetmaking, Welding, Metal Fabricator, Automotive, Heavy Duty, and Auto CAD Principles, to a wider segment of our community, directly addressing the growing demand for skilled labour in our region. Notably, this increased capacity has been achieved without compromising the program's core objective of providing 300 hours of hands-on training for each student. We are also heavily emphasizing essential skills development (resume, cover letter, mock interview, job search, and math) throughout the program, ensuring students are well-rounded and prepared for the workforce.

By focusing on these key trades with extended module times, students are gaining a more comprehensive understanding and developing deeper skill sets. This targeted approach not only enhances the quality of our training but also minimizes faculty preparation time through streamlined, repeatable lesson plans. The result is a more efficient, impactful program that maximizes resource utilization and ensures our graduates are well-prepared to meet the demands of our regional workforce. Crucially, we are also dedicated to assisting students in their job search, providing resources and guidance for application processes, ensuring they transition smoothly into employment. This strategic shift represents a significant step forward in our commitment to providing accessible, high-quality trades education, and we are confident that it will yield substantial benefits for both our students and the community we serve.

**Coastal Forest Technology Diploma – Matt Neuwirth RFT, Coordinator, Coastal Forest Resource Programs**

In late February, the Coastal Forest Resource Technology Program participated in a field school trip to Costa Rica titled Empowering Communities: Climate Action and Resilience in Costa Rica. This transformative experience provided three 2nd year students and one faculty member with invaluable insights into sustainable practices, community-based solutions and environmental stewardship.

Throughout the trip, students engaged with a range of sustainability initiatives, including eco-tourism models, indigenous-led experiences and regenerative agro-forestry practices. Participants gained a deeper understanding of the complexities of environmental sustainability, recognizing that achieving sustainable outcomes requires a holistic approach that balances both positive achievements and ongoing challenges. For example, students acknowledged the paradox of traveling by plane to explore eco-friendly initiatives, reinforcing the importance of considering broader environmental impacts.

Students noted key takeaways that are directly applicable to forestry practices in British Columbia. They observed that Costa Rica's landscape lacks cohesiveness and is fragmented, which poses challenges like those faced in BC. This fragmentation can undermine sustainable practices, such as pesticide-free initiatives, as adjacent areas may still introduce contaminants into shared water sources. Recognizing this complexity reinforced the importance of landscape-level planning in both regions. The importance of landscape-level planning, as demonstrated in Costa Rica, mirrors BC's own forest landscape planning initiatives. Additionally, multi-layered planting strategies designed for drought mitigation and the development of community co-ops were identified as potential strategies that could be adapted locally. Students expressed excitement about exploring

cooperative models and implementing sustainable practices in their future work. This experience has encouraged students to reflect critically on their consumption habits, career goals and the broader impacts of their decisions. The opportunity to connect with Costa Rican communities has left a lasting impression, empowering students to apply these insights in meaningful ways moving forward.



**Everybody who now wants a sloth, raise your hand!**

### **Instrumentation and Electrical Automation Program – Cory Batch, Instructor**

On March 3<sup>rd</sup>, the students of the Instrumentation and Electrical Automation program recently went on a tour of the BC Hydro John Hart Underground Generating Station. The tour was to reinforce the Power Electronics, Controls and Instrumentation theory that is covered in the IEAT Diploma program. The tour was led by David Davidovichs (Project Director) and Chris Orrey (Maintenance Manager) of General Electric Vernova. Both David and Chris are graduates of the IEAT program from 2013 and 2017 respectively. David and Chris run the day-to-day operations of the plant, maintain the instrumentation and controls of the generators and its various Mechanical systems (alongside BC Hydro employees). On another interesting note, the protective relays and distribution controls systems in use at the generating station were manufactured by Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories (SEL), who also employ a past graduate of the IEAT program, Matt Willington.



And here we are! Spring has a mind to move in while Winter is refusing to release its stubborn grip, and who is caught in the middle of all this??? This bitter tug-o-war is wreaking havoc on everyday wardrobe choices making a mockery of any attempt at fashion sense let alone style. Hang in there. In the meantime....



## STUDENTS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### Healthy Trades Outreach & Support

*Submitted by Mez Jiwaji, Associate Director, Student Life & Housing*

The Healthy Trades program continues to make a positive impact across the college campuses. Between January and March, the initiative successfully engaged with over 168 students and community members, promoting health and wellness within the trades sector. The success of these initiatives underscores the importance of our localized approach to education and community engagement. The Healthy Trades program remains a key component of our commitment to supporting skilled tradespeople and fostering a culture of well-being in the workforce.

### Thrive Week in Partnership with the Office of Global Engagement, Indigenous Education and North Island Students Union

*Submitted by Mez Jiwaji, Associate Director, Student Life & Housing*

Thrive Week, held in collaboration with the Office of Global Engagement (OGE), Indigenous Education, and the North Island Students Union (NISU) between March 10 – 14, 2025, was a success. The week-long series of events focused on promoting mental health, emotional, physical and spiritual wellness, and cultural awareness. Highlights included a forest walk, culture sharing with Elders, massages, yoga, and dance parties. These partnerships exemplify our commitment to fostering inclusive, healthy and supportive campus environments.

**Student Housing: Recruitment Gathers Pace**

*Submitted by Mez Jiwaji, Associate Director, Student Life & Housing*

Our housing team's new members, Angie Price, Manager, Housing & Student Life, and Amy Drea, Housing Operations Analyst, were actively recruiting at NIC Fest and within the community in March. These efforts are part of our broader strategy to ensure that students have access to safe, inclusive, and welcoming housing options that deliver a high-quality living learning experience. The engagement at NIC Fest provided an excellent opportunity to connect with prospective students and their families, highlighting the importance of housing in supporting student success.

**New Website CMS and governance strategy**

*Submitted by Erin Kenny, Associate Director, Marketing & Future Students*

In March, Marketing and Future Students, in collaboration with the CMS Working Group, launched NIC's first website content management system (CMS). A CMS, in simple terms, is a piece of software that allows employees to update web content without any coding knowledge. A milestone for NIC, this software now gives 15 employees, across multiple departments, direct access to edit website content. This means timely updates, accurate information and more efficient workflows to support NIC's business processes.

The CMS software selected and procured by NIC is provided by Modern Campus. This vendor also provides the college's curriculum and academic calendar software. Notably, this gives us an important system connection that allows for integration from curriculum development through to content being published to nic.bc.ca.

With the migration to the new CMS, Marketing and Future Students also delivered a refreshed visual interface and user experience. The new look is not only aligned with NIC's brand strategy and identity but also meets global accessibility guidelines and legislation.

Finally, to ensure we maintain the integrity of the public website and corresponding policies, standards and legislation, Marketing and Future Students and the CMS Working Group launched an approved Website Governance Strategy and Framework. This framework establishes clear roles, responsibilities, compliance and technical requirements, and a governance structure that includes a new Website Advisory Group and Community of Practice.

**NIC Fest: NIC's annual education and career festival**

*Submitted by Erin Kenny, Associate Director, Marketing & Future Students*

This March, NIC hosted our third annual NIC Fest, education and career festival in Port Alberni, Campbell River and Comox Valley. NIC Fest is the college's largest recruitment event, welcoming prospective students and their supporters on-campus for the afternoon. Attendees had the chance to tour campus, meet faculty and service areas, join interactive sessions, demonstrations, visit a career fair to network with regional employers, and learn about the student experience. Attendees also had the chance to win a \$1000 tuition bursary courtesy of the NIC Foundation. One winner was selected from each campus community. 2025's event saw the highest number of visitors yet, with a 25% increase in attendance over the 2024 event.



## OFFICE OF GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

*Submitted by Mark Herring, Executive Director, International Education*

### **Outbound Mobility:**

Between January and March 2025, the Office of Global Engagement facilitated a range of international experiential learning opportunities. A total of 23 students, including 19 Indigenous students, along with 2 administrative staff, 5 faculty members, and 1 Elder, participated in programs such as semester exchanges at Kapi'olani Community College in Hawaii, faculty mobility programs with one NIC faculty working on a Prior Learning Recognition Project with an university in Mexico, and field schools in Maui and Oahu, Hawaii, Costa Rica, and New Zealand. These initiatives were made possible through funding from Global Skills Opportunity (GSO), Canada's outbound student mobility program and Faculty Mobility Grant offered by the Government of Canada. Additionally, the Nuuchah-nulth Tribal Council provided financial support for the Rural Indigenous Teacher Pathway program in Maui.

Designed to be culturally responsive and meaningful, the short term opportunities were developed in collaboration with local Indigenous communities, including support and guidance from the Nuuchah-nulth, and Canadian post-secondary institutions such as Northern Lights College, Coast

Mountain College, Aurora College, Vancouver Island University, and Nova Scotia Community College. International partnerships were also integral, involving institutions like Te Whare Wānanga and Te Rito Maioha in New Zealand; Kapi'olani Community College and Maui Community College in Hawaii; and Global Learning Opportunities in Costa Rica.

### **Inbound Exchange:**

In Winter 2025, OGE hosted 3 exchange students from Mexico at Comox Valley campus studying Fine Arts, DGL and Psychology. In Campbell River, OGE hosted a research student from Belgium who worked with CARTI on seaweed aquaculture techniques.

### **International Projects:**



Romana Pasca, Manager Partnerships, Projects and Global Education, Mez Jiwaji, Associate Director Students Life and Mark Herringer, Executive Director OGE participated in The South Africa Skills Training Enhancement Program (SASTEP) Orientation from February 18-21 in Pretoria South Africa. The orientation included representatives from all 14 South African vocational institutions from the Eastern Cape and Limpopo region as well as all of the Canadian partner colleges. NIC is responsible for SASTEP 2 which focusses on 'Gender equality and inclusion in the classroom'. This is the first major project that NIC is leading and will be delivered with all 14 South African Partners together with Canadian partners, Nova Scotia Community College and Suncrest College.

### **Forum for Education Abroad:**

The Forum for Education Abroad is a large, US-based but internationally engaged study abroad association. Their annual conference in Toronto (March 18 – 21) was the first time it had been held outside of the USA. OGE and OIE were asked by the Forum and Education New Zealand together with representatives from UofT, Toronto Metropolitan University and others to help to establish a pre-conference day based on our experience in Indigenizing our international education work. Sara

Child, Romana Pasca and Mark Herringer all presented sessions at ‘Paving a Path Forward: Supporting Indigenous Students in Education Abroad’ to Indigenous and non-Indigenous leaders from Canada, US, Mexico and New Zealand. Further, Renae Leboe, Global Engagement Liaison, Romana and Sara all delivered sessions during the conference which greatly enhanced NIC’s reputation for our work in Indigenization and international education.

**Indigenous Speaker Series:**

OGE and the Office of Indigenous Education collaborated for two Indigenous Speaker Series events held in Qə pix ʔidaʔas (Campbell River campus) in Winter 2025. On January 23, VIU Elder-in-Residence Randy Fred spoke about the importance of Indigenization and Decolonization as steps in the healing journey. On March 13, Dr. Laura Cranmer, a VIU Honorary Research Associate, discussed how writing and collaborative creativity can uplift Indigenous individuals. Both events were attended by NIC staff, students, and members of the community.