

# Indigenous Adult & Higher Learning Association

2014-2015 ANNUAL REPORT



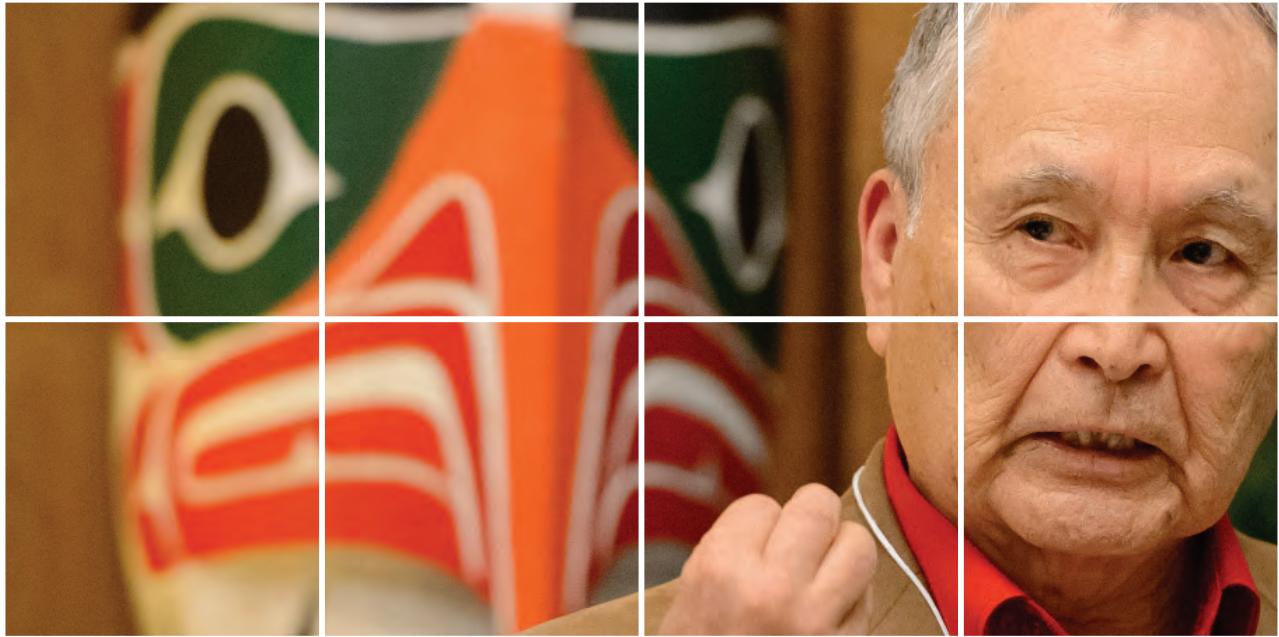


Image: *Umeek* Dr. Richard Atleo

# Contents

Letter from the Chair.....1

Introduction .....2

Programs and Initiatives.....3

Communications .....7

Partnerships.....8

Financial Statements

## Letter from the Chair



*On behalf of the Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association (IAHLA), it is my pleasure to introduce our 2014/15 Annual Report in order to share some of the activities we have undertaken to support IAHLA member institutes in BC.*

*IAHLA is now twelve years old; together, we have grown in scope and depth in our work to enhance continued development of Aboriginal-controlled, culturally appropriate, and credentialed learning opportunities for our students.*

*Despite significant funding cuts this year and uncertain funding in the future, IAHLA has continued to assist our members by providing a voice for Aboriginal Institutes to government and other partners, information sharing, professional development, and tools. We have also continued to provide the services of the data collection project and the external institute evaluation. We will continue to listen to our membership and do our best to respond to our collective priorities.*

*IAHLA works closely with our education partners to advance the critical needs of our members, such as developing a quality assurance mechanism that will recognize our institutes as equal partners in delivering post-secondary programming and producing high class scholarship. IAHLA member institutes have built expertise in serving our unique community and student needs, often serving those who have been left behind by the public education, by offering our students culturally-rich, local, and responsive learning opportunities. Together, we are supporting each other by sharing our learning, our contacts, our lessons learned and a helping hand.*

*I truly appreciate the strong support from IAHLA members and your efforts to engage in collective work.*

*Please do not hesitate to share your ideas and feedback, and thank you for your ongoing support and engagement with IAHLA.*

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Verna Billy-Minnabarriet". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

*Dr. Verna Billy-Minnabarriet*

*IAHLA Chair*



Image: Native Education College

## Introduction

The Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association (IAHLA) is an independent non-profit society with 40 member institutes and one associate member. It was created in 2002 to represent and work on behalf of Aboriginal controlled adult and post-secondary education institutes in British Columbia (BC).

IAHLA members are legal organizations in BC that are governed by an Aboriginal board and offer one or more of the following:

- Educational opportunities for adults pursuing high school graduation
- Preparatory or pre-requisite courses for post-secondary education
- Post-secondary education courses and programs

IAHLA's ten-member Board of Directors is appointed at its Annual General Meeting by the membership.

The institutes IAHLA supports are at the front lines of community-based program delivery. Many were created by communities to address crisis-level drop out and unemployment rates on-reserve. IAHLA's research indicates that its member

institutes play a pivotal role in bringing adults back in to the education system to complete high school, post-secondary and/or training programs, enabling participation in the labour force.

IAHLA's community-based institutes offer a variety of courses and programs that include: college and university programs leading to certificates, diplomas, and degrees; Adult Basic Education leading to the Adult Dogwood Diploma for secondary school completion; language instruction; occupation-specific training and upgrading; and a broad spectrum of lifespan learning programs that support Aboriginal people, communities, languages, and cultures.

Almost all IAHLA member institutes operate without core funding, relying instead on proposal-driven funding and partnerships. Many of our institutes also face challenges due to their small size and remoteness, making it more difficult to achieve economies of scale, build partnerships or access resources due to geography. Through the dedication and sustained efforts of individuals at the community level, IAHLA institutes continue to thrive despite the challenges. IAHLA is vital to supporting their collective efforts to increase recognition for their successful approaches to community-based, culturally relevant learning.

# Programs and Initiatives

## Quality Assurance

IAHLA institutes have long advocated for a specific quality assurance mechanism to recognize the unique role and contributions of community-based, Aboriginal-controlled post-secondary and adult institutes. As noted in previous annual reports, in 2012-13 the BC Ministry of Advanced Education was considering major reforms of the provincial quality assurance structures and processes, which provided an opportunity for IAHLA to advance its long-standing vision. A respectful and relevant quality assurance system has the potential to support a variety of IAHLA's goals including more equitable partnerships, improved external recognition of program quality, better student transitions and the ability to offer more credentials on our own, thus advancing Indigenous scholarship and First Nations control of First Nations education.

In 2014-15, IAHLA worked with FNEC to develop a report that would both provide background on the complex quality assurance systems and processes currently operating in BC, as well as recommendations for accommodating Aboriginal institutes within that system. Two reports were produced, the first provides an overview and analysis of the existing quality assurance system, and the second outlines recommendations for the integration of Aboriginal controlled institutes into the wider quality assurance system. The recommendations include improvements to existing quality assurance processes, as well as recommendations for the development of an Indigenous post-secondary quality assurance authority. It also provides an implementation plan to build quality assurance capacity at Aboriginal controlled institutes. The report has been shared as a draft with Ministry staff and will continue to inform discussions moving forward.

In April 2014, the Ministry of Advanced Education announced the dissolution of the Private Career Training Institutions' Agency (PCTIA) and the transfer of its functions to the Ministry. IAHLA has expressed to the Ministry on multiple occasions that the regulatory

framework for the private career training institutions is inappropriate for IAHLA institutes.

A new *Private Training Act*, replacing the former *Private Career Training Institutions' Act*, was recently passed in both Houses of the BC Legislative Assembly and is scheduled to come into force in the fall of 2015. The Ministry is currently drafting regulations for the Act, which will include standards for private career training institutions based on the PCTIA standards formerly set out in the PCTIA Bylaws. The Ministry supported IAHLA and FNEC to undertake a review of the Bylaws to identify any issues for Aboriginal post-secondary institutes and communities offering relevant post-secondary programming that may wish to be registered or designated under the new private career training institutions' regulations. The Ministry will exempt on-reserve First Nations post-secondary institutes from the private career training legislation, as committed its 2012 Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Policy Framework.

FNEC and IAHLA hired consultants to conduct the review. Five institutes, as well as the FNEC and IAHLA Executives, provided input into the report, to the Ministry. In our communications, FNEC and IAHLA have emphasized that the review of the PCTIA Bylaws is only one part of the ongoing work on quality assurance, which has been a major priority of IAHLA since its founding.

## IAHLA Data Collection Project

Unfortunately, IAHLA did not receive funding from Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) to support the IAHLA Data Collection Project at all this year. Recognizing the importance of this project, IAHLA used its own funding to continue the annual data collection project in 2014-15 on a smaller scale, completing the 10th year of IAHLA's data collection project.

Tindall Consulting surveyed IAHLA institutes and students in the fall of 2014 regarding programming, funding sources, student satisfaction and other indicators. The data informs advocacy, policy, programming services.

Given the diversity among IAHLA members, this project has been integral to helping IAHLA develop



Image: IAHLA

a better understanding of what is happening at the ground level, in particular the breadth of programs and services that are being offered to support the learners. This understanding, in turn, is critical to IAHLA's work in making the case for the important role of IAHLA institutes in BC's post-secondary system. The final reports from the survey have been shared with BC, and contributed to the Ministry's recognition of IAHLA institutes in the Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Policy Framework.

As well, the project helps IAHLA institutes with their own data and records management. IAHLA institutes receive the full report and customized, institute-specific reports.

The project also assists IAHLA in meeting accountability and reporting requirements, using a framework that was developed by First Nations adult and post-secondary institutes for First Nations institutes. In this way, we are able to report data that reflects the values identified by First Nations representatives themselves.

The ongoing IAHLA data collection effort focuses on six major elements: personal development; leadership; cultural development; wisdom development; student satisfaction; and academics. In 2014-15 38% (13 of the

34) eligible institutes and 289 adult learners completed and returned the project surveys.

#### Highlights:

- Of the 13 responding institutes, 2,147 learners were reported as enrolled in the previous year (2013-14).
- 92% had ABE or adult upgrading (to Gr. 12);
- 62% offered post-secondary programs;
- 15% offered trades programs or courses; and
- 92% offered other programs or courses such as First Aid or Superhost.
- 92% of the institutes placed a high level of importance on promoting aspects of culture.

IAHLA appreciates Aboriginal institutes' participation in its annual Data Collection project. The aggregate information has been useful when working with other education stakeholders to highlight the important role of IAHLA institutes in the post-secondary education system in BC.

## External Evaluation

The IAHLA External Institute Evaluation process is intended to help IAHLA institutes to examine, strengthen and create goals and objectives to improve their programming. The evaluation process was developed by the IAHLA Board, and adopts a capacity-building approach to assessment. It is an opportunity for institutes to demonstrate what is being done to enhance and promote First Nations higher learning at their institutes, demonstrate successes, identify areas in need of improvement, and set out a plan for making those improvements.

This year, due to AANDC funding cuts, the IAHLA Board was only able to provide funding for one institute external evaluation, and a smaller amount was provided than in previous years. Lip'alhayc Learning Centre responded to our Expression of Interest and was selected by the IAHLA Board. The process includes an internal review and an external review conducted by an external examiner. IAHLA provides templates for the internal and external review, and the draft reports are approved by the IAHLA Board prior to completion to ensure standards are met.

## Dr. Jacob McKay Awards

Each year, IAHLA awards four \$1000 awards to Aboriginal students who are past or current students of IAHLA institutes. These awards were established in 2011 in memory of the late Dr. Jacob McKay, a founding member of IAHLA and a hereditary chief of the Nisga'a Nation. Strongly rooted in Nisga'a language and culture, Dr. McKay was passionate about supporting young Aboriginal people on their education paths.

The 2014-15 award adjudication is ongoing and will be announced when the recipients are chosen.

## First Nations Language Fluency Degree

IAHLA and the First Nations Education Steering Committee created the Language Degree Advancement Working Group in 2011 to explore ways to increase the number of First Nations language teachers by developing a First Nations Language Degree.

Dr. Jeannette Armstrong wrote a discussion paper in 2011 which outlines a First Nations language degree framework. This framework proposes a stand-alone First Nations language fluency degree, which could ladder into many different programs. Degree recipients could enter Bachelors of Education programs upon completion of their language fluency degree, and therefore increase the number of language teachers.

In the spring of 2015, the Language Degree Advancement Working Group hosted a forum with representatives from public post-secondary institutions to discuss the language fluency degree framework and guiding principles. The Working Group presented the framework, each institution was provided an opportunity to respond to the language fluency degree, and express their interest in forming a partnership to advance the degree. The forum was very well attended, with over 20 representatives from nine BC post-secondary institutions.

The Working Group is currently developing a process to shortlist candidates for partnership. It is crucial that the partner institution have a firm commitment to the project and the needed capacity to advance the Language Fluency Degree.

## Employment Services and Supports Program

The Ministry of Advanced Education's former "Aboriginal Community-Based Delivery Partnerships Program" was integrated into the new Employment Services and Supports (ESS) Program this year and a Call for Proposals was released in February of 2015. The former Aboriginal Community-Based Delivery Partnerships Program was developed in partnership with the Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Partners, including IAHLA and FNEESC, and was intended to fulfill the Ministry of Advanced Education's commitment under goal two of the Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Policy Framework:

*Community based delivery of programs is supported through partnerships between public post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal institutes and communities*

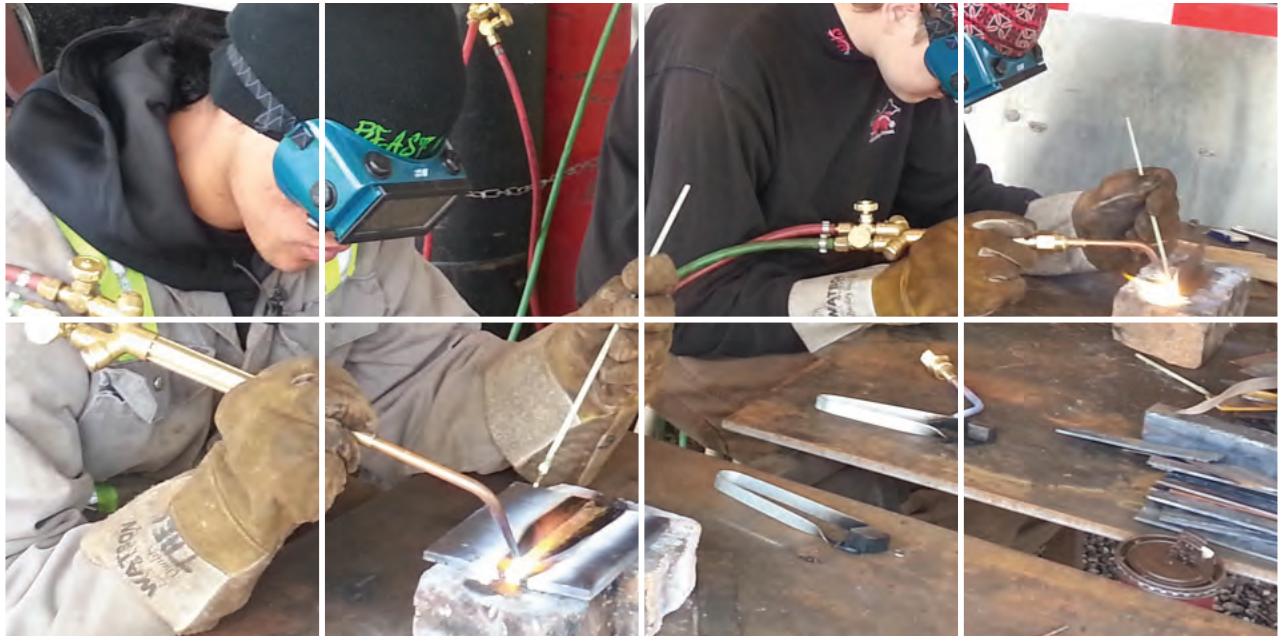


Image: Seabird Island College

Unlike with the former Aboriginal Community-Based Delivery Partnerships Program, IAHLA and FNEESC were not involved until very late in the development of the new ESS. IAHLA and FNEESC expressed strong concerns about the changes. Unfortunately the Ministry was unable to provide support to apply to the program, as it had under the Aboriginal Community-Based Delivery Partnerships Program. Given the urgent need, FNEESC used its own resources to contact communities and institutes, hold informational conference calls and provide support.

IAHLA and FNEESC continue to be involved with the Ministry in providing feedback on this program. Moving forward, we would like to work more closely with the province to increase access and reduce the burden on communities and institutes applying to the program.

## Activity Highlights

- Continued to ensure a voice for IAHLA member institutes with respect to Aboriginal post-secondary policy development and the BC post-secondary education system overall
- Completed two Quality Assurance research projects, the first recommending for the

development of an Indigenous post-secondary quality assurance authority and the second recommending revisions to the former Private Career Training Institutions' Act Bylaws to accommodate Aboriginal institutes that wish to be registered or accredited under the new *Private Training Act*.

- Continued the data collection project, collecting and sharing information about Aboriginal-controlled institutes in BC.
- Sponsored one external evaluation of an IAHLA institute.
- Will award four Dr. Jacob McKay awards to exceptional students who have attended IAHLA institutes.
- Continued to work with partners to support the development of a First Nations language degree framework.
- Supported communities and institutes to access the new Employment Services and Supports Program, which replaced the former Aboriginal Community-Based Delivery Partnerships Program
- More details regarding IAHLA initiatives and research are available at [www.iahla.ca](http://www.iahla.ca).



# Communications

## IAHLA AGM and Conference

The IAHLA Conference and Annual General Meeting (AGM) provides an opportunity for IAHLA members to network, provide direction for ongoing IAHLA activities, and participate in professional development that is focused specifically on the needs of Aboriginal-controlled adult and post-secondary education institutes in BC.

IAHLA held its 11th Annual AGM and Conference at the Coast Plaza Hotel in Vancouver on June 10-11, 2014 and the theme was *Aboriginal Education Diversity in BC: The New Tomorrow*. Speakers included:

- IAHLA Champion and hereditary chief Dr. Richard Atleo,
- Dr. Lee Brown, the former Director of the Institute of Aboriginal Health in the College of Health Disciplines and the Indigenous Doctoral Program in the Department of Educational Studies at UBC, and
- Dr. Bob Morgan, a highly respected and acknowledged Aboriginal educator and researcher who has worked extensively throughout Australia and internationally in the field of Aboriginal knowledge and learning.

Participants had the opportunity to attend a selection of workshops on topics ranging from accreditation, adult literacy, building strong partnerships, and nurturing learners.

## Aboriginal Learning Links

IAHLA and FNEESC continue to host Aboriginal Learning Links website [www.aboriginallearning.ca](http://www.aboriginallearning.ca), an initiative of the BC Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Partners Group. Aboriginal Learning Links provides information on scholarships, bursaries, and resources for post-secondary education in BC. Designed for Aboriginal adult and post-secondary learners, the site links students to information and resources about financial

support, post-secondary institutes, child care, housing, career opportunities and much more.

IAHLA and FNEESC are undertaking significant redesign of the Aboriginal Learning Links website, which will likely go live by the fall of 2015.

## Other Communications Activities

IAHLA supports regular communications with its members and partners by distributing a newsletter and regular information updates, as well as maintaining a website at [www.iahla.ca](http://www.iahla.ca).

---

## Communications Highlights

- Hosted the 11th IAHLA Conference and AGM, with over 100 attendees.
- Continued publishing electronic newsletters jointly with the FNEESC Post-Secondary Sub-Committee. These newsletters are sent to all IAHLA members, the FNEESC Board, Education Coordinators, and partners in post-secondary education via email and posted on the IAHLA and FNEESC websites.
- Continued to revised and enhance the IAHLA website to provide information, timely news and event updates, and increase awareness of IAHLA and Indigenous institutes.
- Continued to update and revise our IAHLA member contact and authorized representative lists.
- Revised and updated the Aboriginal Learning Links website [www.aboriginallearning.ca](http://www.aboriginallearning.ca).

## Partnerships

IAHLA is committed to working in partnership with a range of other post-secondary partners in order to effectively share information and resources, collaborate on relevant projects, and promote a coordinated approach to Aboriginal adult and post-secondary education issues in BC.

### FNESC and the FNSA

Since its establishment, IAHLA has worked particularly closely with the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) and the First Nations Schools Association (FNSA).

FNESC is the provincial-level non-profit society that represents and supports First Nations in BC in their efforts to ensure quality educational opportunities for First Nations students. The FNSA is a provincial-level non-profit society with a mandate to work on the collective needs of First Nations schools in this province.

FNESC has a long-standing Post-Secondary Sub-committee that reports to its full Board of Directors on First Nations post-secondary education issues. FNESC and IAHLA generally collaborate in meetings with partners in post-secondary education to present a common front for First Nations communities and institutes. IAHLA and FNESC jointly publish an electronic newsletter on First Nations Post-Secondary Education issues in BC. Staff are shared between the two organizations, which is a necessity given the current underfunding of First Nations post-secondary education.

### Government Agencies

IAHLA strives to maintain a positive and effective relationship with relevant government agencies in order to increase the recognition of and support for Aboriginal-controlled institutes in BC, and facilitate greater success for adult learners enrolled in public institutes. IAHLA is actively involved in ongoing discussions with the BC Ministry of Advanced Education, guided by the commitments in their Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Policy Framework. IAHLA

also communicates regularly with Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) to promote the needs and priorities of Aboriginal institutes with the federal government.

### Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Partners Group

IAHLA is a founding member of the BC Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Partners Group. In March 2005, a number of post-secondary education stakeholders came together and committed to improving access and success for all Aboriginal post-secondary students. The group signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), formalizing their commitment. The MoU states:

*We, the undersigned, acknowledge, that although there has been some progress in recent years, there is a need for improved levels of participation and success for Aboriginal learners in post-secondary education and training in British Columbia. We state our intention to work collectively toward this goal within the mandates of our respective organizations and to bring in other partners as appropriate. This will be accomplished by building on our successes to date, collectively identifying needs, and implementing strategies to improve the success of Aboriginal post-secondary learners in British Columbia.*

The Post-Secondary Education Partners Group continues to be active and engaged, meeting on a regular basis to share information and implement joint strategies. Further information about our partnerships can be accessed on our website: <http://iahla.ca/about-iahla/partners>.



IMAGE: IAHLA Conference 2015

---

## Partnership Highlights

- Worked collaboratively with the Ministry of Advanced Education on the implementation of the Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Policy Framework
- Continued as a key member of the Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Partners Table, increasing IAHLA's profile and the profile of Aboriginal post-secondary education in general, including participating on its Policy Working Group, Transitions Working Group (joint with the K-12 Aboriginal Education Partners) and Data Working Group.
- Worked with the Ministry of Advanced Education to establish a place for Aboriginal-controlled institutes in BC's quality assurance system for post-secondary institutions

## Financial Statements

*Audited financial statements will be added upon approval and are available upon request.*



## Indigenous Adult & Higher Learning Association

Suite 113-100 Park Royal South  
West Vancouver, BC V7T 1A2  
[www.iahla.ca](http://www.iahla.ca)  
1-877-422-3672 / 604-925-6087  
[iahla@fnesc.ca](mailto:iahla@fnesc.ca)