



Indigenous Adult &
Higher Learning Association
ANNUAL REPORT
2015/2016



Our mission is to support quality post-secondary educational institutes that leverage Indigenous language, culture and knowledge to create adaptable, competent, skilled citizens who are able to contribute to local, provincial, and national advancement.





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Letter from the Chair



DR. VERNA BILLY-MINNABARRIET, IAHLA CHAIR

On behalf of the Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association (IAHLA), it is my pleasure to introduce our 2015/16 Annual Report in order to share some of the activities we have undertaken to support our institutes.

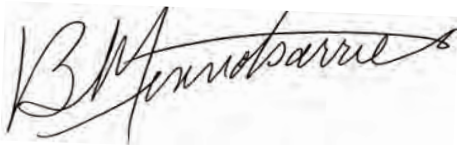
IAHLA was registered as a non-profit society in 2003 and is now thirteen years old; together, we have grown in scope and depth of work that is undertaken to enhance continued development of Aboriginal-controlled, culturally appropriate, and credentialed learning opportunities for our students. Our mission is to support quality post-secondary educational institutes that leverage Indigenous language, culture and knowledge to create adaptable, competent, skilled citizens who are able to contribute to local, provincial, and national advancement.

We continue to work closely with our education partners to advance the critical needs of our members and to engage in the development of quality assurance systems and other structures that increase recognition for our institutes and provide our students with new opportunities. I admire the expertise we have developed together and believe we continue to have major contributions to offer post-secondary and adult education in this province, due to our unique community perspective and our ability to offer our learners culturally-rich, local, and responsive learning opportunities.

We also recognize that our institutes lack the core, stable funding that would allow them to more effectively meet community needs and provide stability to our learners. We are facing declining support from Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) in our funding. More significantly, substantive changes announced to the structure of the Indian Studies Support Program, which so many of our IAHLA members rely on for program support, has yet to be addressed by the current government. Despite these challenges and significant funding cuts to IAHLA for two years and uncertain funding for the future, IAHLA will continue to assist our members by advocacy, sharing information, resources, and support.

Your continued support of IAHLA and your on-going commitment to engage in collective work to improve education outcomes for our learners is a true testament to the resilience and creativity of our members.

Thank you for your support and engagement with IAHLA and I look forward to hearing your ideas and feedback.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'V. Billy-Minnabarriet', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr. Verna Billy-Minnabarriet

IAHLA Chair

Introduction



NATIVE EDUCATION COLLEGE

The Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association (IAHLA) is an independent non-profit society responsible for supporting and representing Aboriginal-controlled adult and post-secondary institutes in British Columbia. IAHLA provides a unified voice for 40 member institutes and supports its members through policy, advocacy, research, professional development, and networking opportunities. IAHLA is also committed to building strategic partnerships to enhance the quality of education available for Aboriginal adult and post-secondary learners.

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 education or training programs and enabling participation in the labour force.

IAHLA's community-based institutes offer a broad spectrum 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. IAHLA institutes also work in collaboration with many of BC's 25 public post-secondary colleges, institutes and universities to deliver programming to our learners.

Working together with IAHLA, Aboriginal controlled adult and post-secondary education institutes are striving to do the following.

- Increase recognition of the institutes' unique and successful approaches to community-based, culturally relevant learning
- Join public and private institutes as the third sector of the adult and post-secondary education community in BC
- Work with our colleagues in the Ministry of Advanced Education to implement and oversee the recommendations and actions identified in the *Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Policy Framework and Action Plan*
- Continue to participate and consult with our partners and the Ministry of Advanced Education in the development of the new Quality Assurance Framework and processes related to PCTIA
- Contribute in a direct and meaningful way to First Nations' economic and social development efforts, and to First Nations' efforts to promote and revitalize First Nations languages and cultures
- Gain recognition and accreditation for the institutes' courses and programs
- Coordinate the development, accreditation, and sharing of courses and programs
- Develop and share curricula and credentials, particularly in First Nations language instruction and accreditation
- Collaborate to effectively use existing resources and increase opportunities for adult learners
- Share successful approaches with public and private sector institutes to improve the overall success of Aboriginal adult learners
- Make innovative use of emerging communications and learning technologies, both to provide more educational choices to Aboriginal learners and to enhance networking amongst the institutes
- Promote the need for adequate, sustained core and program funding to support the critical efforts of Aboriginal institutes

Almost all IAHLA institutes operate without core funding, relying instead on proposal-driven funding and partnership, as well as facing challenges of being generally small institutes, widely separated from one another by 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 & Initiatives

Quality Assurance

The current period of changes to the Ministry of Advanced Education's quality assurance structures and processes have provided an opportunity for IAHLA to advocate for systems and processes that better meet the needs of IAHLA institutes. A respectful and relevant quality assurance system has the potential to support a variety of IAHLA's goals including the development of successful partnerships, smooth student transitions relationship building and credentialing.

In 2015, new legislation was passed relating to private career training institutes. The Province is currently working on the regulations and the act is expected to come into force in late fall 2014. IAHLA has provided extensive feedback and is in ongoing discussions with the Ministry and the Private Career Training Institutions Agency to ensure that the regulations are appropriate for those Aboriginal-controlled institutes that pursue registration or accreditation. This work has been informed by external experts, based on feedback provided by member institutes.

IAHLA recognizes that while some institutes have found PCTIA registration and accreditation to be beneficial, others do not find it relevant. As such, we continue to work towards the development of Aboriginal institute-specific quality assurance mechanisms, as committed to under the Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Policy Framework.

IAHLA Data Collection Project

Since 2005, IAHLA has been working to collect and share substantive information about Aboriginal institutes in BC. IAHLA's data collection project is integral to helping IAHLA develop a better

understanding of what is happening in our member institutes, 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.

In March 2016, IAHLA retained Tindall Consulting to survey our institutes and students regarding programming, funding sources, student satisfaction and other indicators. The data informs advocacy, policy and programming services.

The final report from the survey will be shared with the Ministry of Advanced Education and contribute to the Ministry's on-going recognition of the role of IAHLA institutes, especially with respect to the *Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Policy Framework*.

IAHLA institutes will receive the full report and customized, institute-specific reports. In the past, Institutes have indicated that they find the detailed reports useful for:

- educational and strategic planning
- integrating with other education and training services
- enhancing student support and learning
- reporting on results

The project also assists IAHLA and its member institutes 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 previous years, student participants had extremely positive opinions about their IAHLA institutes and we expect to see the trend continue when results of the 2016 survey are available.

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.

First Nations Language Fluency Degree

IAHLA and the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) created the Language Degree Advancement Working Group in 2011 to explore ways to increase the number of First Nations language teachers. The number of professionally trained language teachers is in decline and language fluency among adults eligible to enter language teacher training programs is also decreasing. IAHLA and FNESC hope that the work that they have undertaken in this area will provide increased opportunities to advance training and fluency in First Nations language. Recently, we have partnered with the Language Fluency Degree Consortium (LFD Consortium) to design a framework and implement pilot projects for a First Nations language fluency degree (the degree). The consortium includes partners from Wilp Wilxo'oskwhl Nisga'a, the University of Northern British Columbia, the University of British Columbia Okanagan, the University of British Columbia Vancouver, the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology, and the Okanagan Indian

Education Resources Society (En'owkin Centre). The partners have created a draft partnership agreement, which sets the groundwork for our joint efforts through identification of our purpose, recognition of guiding principles and describing how the partnership will function. As a part of the partnership agreement we will also build a work plan for the degree framework and pilot program advancement.

The LFD Consortium is also in the process of creating a proposal for the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Connections grants program. Connections grants support workshops, colloquiums, conferences, forums, summer institutes or other events or outreach geared toward short-term, targeted knowledge mobilization initiatives. The grants are typically valued at \$7,000 to \$50,000 over one year. The Connections grant is to support a best practices symposium on the topic of building adult language fluency in First Nations languages.

SNUNEYMUXW FIRST NATION HOUSE OF LEARNING



Adult Education Research

Adult education is a primary focus of many IAHLA institutes, and for many communities, our institutes may provide the only opportunity for community members to access the upgrading required to move on to further education. Over the past year significant changes have been made by the Province of BC – the elimination of tuition free adult basic education at public post-secondary institutes and removal of tuition-free upgrading for graduated adults in the public school system. These changes disproportionately impact Aboriginal students, as far fewer have graduated from high school over the years, and of those that do, few have the requirements to enter directly into post-secondary and training.

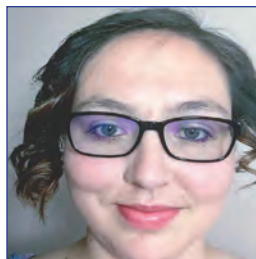
At the same time, we have consistently heard of challenges faced by IAHLA institutes in funding their upgrading and adult education programs, particularly eligibility challenges and funding inadequacy under the adult nominal roll.

IAHLA is working with FNEESC on a research project on adult education policies which will lead to a series of recommendations related to adult education policy and funding in the public K-12 and post-secondary systems, First Nations Schools, and Aboriginal-controlled institutes.

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 following 2015/16 recipients were selected by the Awards Subcommittee of the IAHLA Board:



Emily Cook, Gitga'at First Nation

Emily's goal is to complete her Associate of Arts Degree by the end of spring 2016 and then proceed to a Bachelor of Social Work

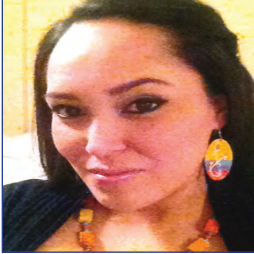
program, with the goal of graduating by spring 2018. At that time, she hopes to return to the workforce as a social worker on Vancouver Island, which is her home territory.



Cheyenne Cunningham, Katzie First Nation

Cheyenne is attending Simon Fraser University on a full-time basis. She has not declared a major at this time but is leaning towards a Bachelor of

Arts Degree with a major in First Nations Studies. She is considering a minor in Global Studies or Archaeology, which she developed an interest in while undertaking fieldwork as part of a work experience project through her Band.



*Naomi G. Jules,
Tl'azt'en Nation*

Naomi obtained an Aboriginal Tourism Management Diploma in July of 2012. Her educational goal is to graduate with a

Bachelor's Degree in Hospitality Management from Vancouver Career College and then move on to a Master's of Business Administration. Naomi chose the hospitality field specifically because of her years of experience working with the public and her belief that she has the drive to succeed in the hospitality industry.



Pat Raphael, Syilx/Cree

Pat, from the Okanagan Valley, is attending the En'owkin Centre to learn her Syilx language and to further her art education. Her goal is to become a language teacher,

majoring in art, and with the potential of owning and running her own art gallery.

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
- Participated in the Ministry of Advanced Education's quality assurance framework development process, ensuring that the needs of IAHLA institutes are reflected in any policy developments
- Adjudicated and awarded four scholarships for the Dr. Jacob McKay Awards Program
- Continued the data collection project aimed at collecting and sharing information about Aboriginal-controlled institutes in BC to inform policy, programs, and student supports
- Continued to work with partners to support the development of a First Nations language degree framework
- Aboriginal Adult education and Dual Credit research

Partnerships

IAHLA is committed to working in partnership with a range of other 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 & 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 united voice for First Nations communities and Aboriginal institutes. IAHLA and FNESC jointly publish an electronic newsletter on First Nations Post-Secondary Education issues in BC.

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*. This includes participation in a wide range of working groups and committees, such as the Irving K Barber Aboriginal Student Award Steering and Adjudication Committees, the Aboriginal Service Plan Steering Committee, and the Steering Committee and adjudication team for the Aboriginal community based stream of the Employment Services and Supports Program. IAHLA also communicates regularly with Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) to promote the needs and priorities of Aboriginal institutes with the federal government.

BC Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Partners Table

IAHLA is a founding member of the BC Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Partners Table. 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



LIP'ALHAYC LEARNING CENTRE

strategies to improve the success of Aboriginal post-secondary learners in British Columbia.

The Post-Secondary Education Partners 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>.

Partnership Highlights

- Collaborated with the Ministry of Advanced Education on the implementation of the Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Policy Framework, including: Aboriginal Service Plan initiative, Irving K. Barber Aboriginal Awards and development of an annual report on Aboriginal post-secondary data
- 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 and Data Working Group.
- Acted as standing members of the BC Post-Secondary Institution First Nations Articulation Committee, ensuring that Aboriginal post-secondary education perspectives are integrated into provincial articulation
- Represented IAHLA institutes at bilateral meetings with the Ministry of Advanced Education and FNEC

Communications

IAHLA AGM and Conference

The IAHLA Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Conference 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 12th Annual AGM and Conference at the Coast Plaza Hotel in Vancouver on May 12-13, 2015 and attracted approximately 120 participants. Speakers and special guests included:

- Dr. Richard Atleo, *Umeek*, a hereditary chief, esteemed Elder and a strong advocate for IAHLA. Dr. Atleo has taught in the First Nations Studies Department at Malaspina University College and the University of Victoria. He is currently a Research Liaison at the University of Manitoba and an Associate Adjunct Professor at the University of Victoria.
- Dr. Jackie Green from the Haisla Nation. She is a Director and an Associate Professor in the School of Social Work and holds a BSW, MPA, and a PhD through the Faculty of Human and Social Development. Her PhD focus includes an analysis of traditional teachings (*Nuyuum*) implemented within leadership, practices standards and policy. Committed to decolonization & cultural renewal, her research interests involve strategizing programs and policies that incorporate a strong Indigenous focus and analysis. She currently is a project manager for the Indigenous Child Well-Being Research Network through the faculty of Human and Social Development.

- Pauline Waterfall, *Hilistis*, a member of the Heiltsuk Nation, a proud ambassador for her people, and an advocate of access to education for all First Nations people. For 35 years she has worked to establish adult learning centres in Bella Bella. This work has resulted in the Waglisla Adult Learning Centre, which offers adult upgrading; and Heiltsuk College, which offers post-secondary courses. These two centres have taught three generations and more than 600 Heiltsuk people. Hilistis also served as a founding member of IAHLA. She is a former Chair and co-chair of the Board. Hilistis is known as a “keeper of the knowledge” in her community and she has played a significant role in revitalizing the Hailhzaqvla language.

In the spirit of the conference theme, *Celebrating Partnerships*, public post-secondary institutions were invited to participate. Participants had the opportunity to identify leading practices in partnerships which included a selection of workshops on topics ranging from community-based assessments, cedar weaving, land based learning to promote sustainable and peaceful co-existence, integrating Indigenous Knowledge into the curriculum, providing effective student supports, adult education, building strong partnerships and nurturing learners.

Aboriginal Learning Links

In the summer of 2015, IAHLA and FNEC launched a new Aboriginal Learning Links website at www.aboriginallearning.ca. The website was redeveloped through an initiative of the BC Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Partners Group. Aboriginal Learning Links provides information on planning for education,

selecting institutions and programs, applying for school, developing a budget, employment, scholarships, bursaries, band sponsorship and resources for post-secondary education in BC. Information is also provided on housing and child care options as well as on-campus services. The site also provides links to post-secondary institutions who have bursary and tuition waiver programs for former children in care.

Other Communications Activities

IAHLA supports regular communications with its members and other interested stakeholders by distributing a newsletter and providing regular information updates, as well as maintaining a website at www.iahla.ca.

Audited financial statements will be added upon approval.

Communications Highlights

- Hosted the 12th IAHLA Conference and AGM, with over 120 attendees
- Continued publishing electronic newsletters jointly with the FNEC Post-Secondary Sub-Committee. These newsletters are sent to all IAHLA members, the FNEC Board, Education Coordinators, and partners in post-secondary education via email and posted on the IAHLA and FNEC websites.
- Continued to provide information, timely news and event updates, and increase awareness of IAHLA and Indigenous institutes
- Revised and updated the Aboriginal Learning Links website www.aboriginallearning.ca

Board Members 2015/16

Verna Billy-Minnabarriet, Chair
Secwepemc / St'át'imc / Nlaka'pamux Region
Nicola Valley Institute of Technology

Lauren Terbasket, Vice-Chair
Kootenay / Okanagan Region
En'owkin Centre

Brenda Leighton
Member at Large
Coastal Training Centre

Robert Schuster, Secretary
Member at Large
Lil'wat Nation / Mount Currie Band

Dr. Bernice Touchie
Nuu-chah-nulth / Coast Salish Region
Ittatsoo Learning Centre

Cathy Warren
Kaska / Dene / Tahltan / Tagish / Inland Tlingit Region
Kwadacha Dune Ty

Deanna Nyce
Haida / Tsimshian / Haisla / Nisga'a Region
Wilp Wilxo'oskwhl Nisga'a

Louise Lacerte, Treasurer
Tsilhqot'in / Carrier / Sekani Region
Lake Babine Nation

Tracey Woods
Gitksan / Wet'suwet'en Region
Gitksan / Wet'suwet'en Education Society

Vacant
Kwakiutl / Heiltsuk / Nuxalk / Oweekeno Region

IAHLA CONFERENCE 2015, SQUAMISH NATION OPENING



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IAHLA Conference 2016, photographer Jerry Willows

Dr. Richard Atleo, Umeek, IAHLA Champion

Member Institutes 2015/16

Ahousaht Education Authority	Ahousaht
NTC Nuuchahnulth Tribal Council NETP	Port Alberni
Blueberry River First Nation Adult Centre	Buick Creek
CFDC of Central Interior First Nations	Kamloops
Chemainus Native College	Ladysmith
Coastal Training Centre	Prince Rupert
Cowichan Tribes - Quw'utsun Syuw'entst Lelum	Duncan
En'owkin Centre (Okanagan Indian Educational Resources Society)	Penticton
Fort Nelson First Nation Community Education Authority (Chalo School)	Fort Nelson
Gitksan Wet'suwet'en Education Society	Hazelton
Gitwangak Education Society	Kitwanga
Heiltsuk College	Bella Bella
Ittattoo Learning Centre	Ucluelet
Jean Marie Joseph Adult School	Prince George
K'ak'ot'lats'i School	Coal Harbour
Kitamaat Valley Institute	Kitimat
Kwadacha Dune Tiiy - Aatse Davie School	Fort Ware
Kyah Wiget Education Society	Smithers
Lip'ahayc Learning Centre	Bella Coola
Muskoti Learning Centre - Saulteau First Nations	Chetwynd
NEC Native Education College	Vancouver
Neskonlith Education Center	Chase

Nicola Valley Institute of Technology (NVIT)	Merritt
Northern Shuswap Tribal Council	Williams Lake
Office of Indigenous Affairs - University of Victoria	Victoria
Penelakut Island Learning Centre	Chemainus
Penticton Indian Band Adult Education	Prince George
Prince George Nechako Aboriginal Employment & Training Association	Penticton
Saanich Adult Education Centre	Brentwood Bay
Seabird College	Agassiz
Sechelt Indian Band Education Centre	Sechelt
Secwepemc Cultural Education Society	Kamloops
Skeetchestn Band Education	Savona
Snuneymuxw First Nation/House of Learning	Nanaimo
Sto:lo Nation	Chilliwack
Ted Williams Memorial Learning Centre	Burns Lake
Tl'azt'en Adult Learning Centre	Ft St. James
Tsay Keh Dene	Prince George
Ts'zil Learning Centre (Mount Currie Band Council)	Mount Currie
Wabsuwilaks'm Gitselasu	Terrace
Wilp Wilxo'oskwhl Nisga'a	Gitwinksihlkw





**Indigenous Adult &
Higher Learning Association**

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