



**Board of Governors**  
**INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE**  
**MINUTES**

**Monday, June 2, 2025**

**11:08 a.m. – 12:18 p.m.**

**VIDEOCONFERENCE**

Approval: September 11, 2025

**Chair** Dr. hagwil hayetsk (Charles Menzies)  
**Members** President Benoit-Antoine Bacon  
Board Chair Miranda Lam, K.C.  
Ms. Irene Lanzinger  
Mr. Dallas Leung

**Regrets** Dr. Philipp Reichert  
Chancellor Judy Rogers, C.M  
Ms. Leona Sparrow, Musqueam Indian Band Ms.  
Pauline Terbasket, Okanagan Nation Alliance

**Designated Executive Liaisons**

Dr. Gage Averill, Provost and Vice-President Academic,  
UBC Vancouver  
Dr. Lesley Cormack, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and  
Principal, UBC Okanagan

**Board Secretary**

Ms. Karen Hakkarainen

**Supported By**

Ms. Adrienne Vedan, Senior Advisor on Indigenous Affairs to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, UBC Okanagan

Committee Chair hagwil hayetsk (Charles Menzies) called the open session of the June 2, 2025 meeting of the Indigenous Engagement Committee to order at 11:08 a.m.

The Chair read a passage from the First Nations House of Learning statement, issued by a group of Indigenous staff and faculty at UBC and published on their website on May 21, 2025. The statement affirmed that First Nations land rights are recognized under Section 35 of the Canadian Constitution and emphasized that land acknowledgements of unceded territory are not political in nature.

He respectfully acknowledged the ancestral and unceded territories of the Musqueam and of the Syilx Okanagan Nation upon which UBC campuses are located.

The Board Secretary reviewed attendance and confirmed quorum.

### **1. Approval of Agenda**

The Chair asked if any Committee members would like to make any amendments to the agenda. No requests were made.

The following resolution was moved, seconded, and **CARRIED**:

**IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED that the Indigenous Engagement Committee approves as circulated the Agenda for the June 2, 2025 open session of the Indigenous Engagement Committee meeting.**

The Chair asked whether Governors had any actual, apparent or perceived conflicts of interest in relation to any of the items on the agenda. None were declared.

### **2. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The Chair asked whether Committee members had noted any errors or omissions in the Minutes of the previous meeting. None were noted.

The following resolution was moved, seconded, and **CARRIED**:

**IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED that the Indigenous Engagement Committee approves Minutes of the March 11, 2025 open session of the Indigenous Engagement Committee meeting.**

### 3. Indigenous Language Fluency Degree Programs at UBC Okanagan

Responsible Executives: Lesley Cormack, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Principal, UBC Okanagan  
Rehan Sadiq, Provost and Vice-President Academic, UBC Okanagan

Presenters: Silvia Tomášková, Dean, Irving K. Barber Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, UBC Okanagan  
Jeannette Armstrong, Professor, Irving K. Barber Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, UBC Okanagan  
Ashley Gregoire, PhD student of the Indigenous Knowledges Interdisciplinary Graduate Studies, Irving K. Barber Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, UBC Okanagan  
Aaron Derrickson, PhD graduate Interdisciplinary Graduate Studies, Irving K. Barber Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, UBC Okanagan

The Committee received a presentation highlighting the Indigenous language revitalization program at UBC Okanagan, focusing on the Bachelor of Nsyilxcn Language Fluency and partnerships with the Syilx Nation and other Interior Salish language groups. Initiated in 2005, the program has expanded to include four language fluency degrees (Nsyilxcn, Nle?kepmx, St'át'imc, and Secwepemc). The program emphasizes community-based learning, Indigenous methodologies, and technology integration, such as digital dictionaries, to preserve cultural and ecological knowledge. The Indigenous Knowledges theme supports graduate research, and the proposed Interior Salish Study Center aims to centralize resources, enhance teacher training, and address intergenerational language trauma, fostering a broader research field that redefines community, environment, and health perspectives.

The Chair thanked the presenters for their insightful and heartfelt presentations, noting their importance and resonance, and, due to time constraints, directed Committee members to submit any questions or comments they may have for the presenters via the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Principal, UBC Okanagan.

### 4. Academic presentation: Bachelor of Indigenous Land Stewardship Program at UBC Vancouver

Responsible Executive: Gage Averill, Provost and Vice-President Academic, UBC Vancouver

Presenters: Robert Kozak, Dean, Faculty of Forestry  
Garry Merkel, Director, Center of Indigenous Land Stewardship

The Committee received a presentation on the Bachelor of Indigenous Land Stewardship program (the "Program") at UBC's Faculty of Forestry, launched in 2024 with 75% Indigenous students and growing interest across Canada. Co-developed with Indigenous communities over a decade, the Program, supported by an \$8.5 million Mastercard Foundation grant, prepares students for careers in land resource management rooted in Indigenous knowledge and earth-based ethics. The Indigenous Center of Land Stewardship aims to integrate Indigenous land ethics with modern governance, management, and economic systems, fostering a global movement for sustainable land stewardship. The Program emphasizes multi-access delivery, community engagement, and a repository for Indigenous stewardship knowledge, with plans for field schools and professional development modules to drive transformative change.

Discussion highlighted the Program's approach to addressing climate change by integrating Indigenous earth-based ethics with practical stewardship systems, emphasizing ecological restoration and collaboration within existing jurisdictional frameworks, while acknowledging the societal and political challenges in convincing the world to adopt these methods.

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**ACTION ITEMS**

None arising.

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**Adjournment**

The Indigenous Engagement Committee open session adjourned at 12:18 p.m.