

BCIT ABORIGINAL SERVICES

# NEWS UPDATE

SPRING 2015

BRITISH COLUMBIA  
INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

ABORIGINAL SERVICES

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**BCIT 50 YEARS**

We are proud to present volume three of the BCIT Aboriginal Services News Update. We hope to use this newsletter as a platform for discussion, innovation, information and community involvement.

In this third issue we focus on the diverse journalism skills of our Aboriginal Peer Mentor and Mentee editors:

Austin Goode, graduate, Broadcast and Media Communications,  
Broadcast and Online Journalism,  
Ken Paulin, second year, Broadcast and Media Communications,  
Broadcast and Online Journalism.

Austin and Ken write about the Peer 2 Peer Mentorship Program, Aboriginal Culture – Title and Rights, the Student Association Aboriginal Cultural Club, and news happening around the Coast Salish territories.

Also, make sure to check out programs and services offered through BCIT Aboriginal Services. Special thanks to BCIT alumni, graduates, mentors and Aaron Nelson Moody

“Splash” (our Housepost Carver). Your cultural influence, passion, and skills influence us greatly.

## DATES AND EVENTS

### EVENTS

#### *Housepost Unveiling*

*June 10, 2015*

*The Housepost is being unveiled at the Honouring Our Graduates Ceremony.*

#### *Honouring our Graduates Celebration*

*June 10, 2015*

*BCIT Burnaby Campus  
SW1 Building  
Burnaby, BC*

*See inside Update for more info on our 2015 Celebration.*

### UPCOMING SCHOLARSHIP, BURSARIES AND AWARDS

*The Norma Rose Point Student Success Grant for Aboriginal Students deadlines:*

#### *Technology*

*September 28, 2015*

#### *Trades*

*June 29, 2015*

#### *Apprenticeship completion*

*Inquire at Aboriginal Services.*

#### *The Irving K. Barber BC Scholarship Society*

*Awards of \$1,000 – \$3,500 for Aboriginal learners.*

*Deadline March 2016.*

#### *BC Hydro Scholarship Packages*

*Accepted between January – April 2016.*



“SPLASH” – BCIT’S HOUSEPOST CARVER IN ACTION.

## GROUND BREAKING VICTORY FOR FIRST NATION'S LAND RIGHTS.

BY KEN PAULIN

The highest court in BC has made a ruling that is a complete game changer for Aboriginal land claim rights. The BC Court of Appeals has ruled that Industrial Giants must respect Aboriginal territorial claims just as they would for any other Canadian Landowner. The decision has incredible ramifications, as it paves the way for First Nations to launch lawsuits to protect their territory from private parties, even without having to prove aboriginal title.

Three Judges overturned a lower court ruling that stated the Saik'uk and Stellat'en First Nations did not have a right to sue mining giant Rio Tinto on the premise that Aboriginals must first establish their title. The suit was originally initiated in September 2011. The Nations contended that the dam Rio Tinto had created in the 1950's to power their mining operation had caused nuisance and breached their right to the natural waterway that runs through their land. They are seeking damages for property rights violations, alleging the electricity generator harmed the Nechako River system and fisheries. The decision means they can now take their claim to trial.

This case sets precedence that now has to be applied across the province. Opening the door for First Nations to seek damages from industry giants in forestry, mining and any other private institution that affects their territory. It may also effectively halt the much contested pipeline that would have carried oil from the Tar Sands. It is difficult to see a route from Alberta to the Pacific Ocean that doesn't cross Aboriginal land.

Justice David Tysoe wrote that setting a separate standard for Aboriginal people, before they can sue other parties to enforce their rights, is inconsistent with the charter.

"Aboriginal people are part of Canada's community, and they should not be treated disadvantageously in comparison to any other litigant asserting claims...", he wrote.



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## ARE YOU AN ABORIGINAL TRADES STUDENT WHO NEEDS FINANCIAL SUPPORT?

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**Contact us today.**

Aboriginal Services  
604.432.8474

[bcit.ca/aboriginal](http://bcit.ca/aboriginal)

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## DEAFENING SILENCE

BY KEN PAULIN

I believe that there are many people in Canada who watch American news, see all the racist police violence against black people and think “that’s so wrong, I’m glad I live in Canada where that kind of thing doesn’t happen”. Sadly it does happen here. It happens and in a way it’s more insidious because it happens in silence. In the US, they protest, rally and cry for justice. The Media generally supports the effort for to end racism.

In Canada we chose not to notice the injustice and police violence and discrimination against Aboriginal people. First Nations often walk alone with movements like Idle No More. Which is reported, then dismissed. Where is the rage that hundreds of women are murdered, men harassed and beaten for the crime of being born an in Indian?

So before looking down your nose at American racial problems, look under it and see what is really happening. Then perhaps next time you see a March for justice, or a plea for an inquiry for our missing sisters, mothers, and daughters, remember that at least in the US there is indignation in their society.

FIRST NATIONS HOUSEPOST ON THE MOVE.





## ABORIGINAL MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

BY KEN PAULIN

Sometimes everyone needs a helping hand. These words ring true at any point in life, but they are especially meaningful when you're a new student taking the first tenuous steps along the path to obtaining a post-secondary education. The truth is that often you don't know what it is that you don't know. When you're feeling bogged down by the seemingly endless list of important assignments that are due, or you're feeling the specter of exams always looming, it can be quite overwhelming if you don't have a place to turn for help.

Fortunately at Aboriginal Services, there is an invaluable program in place to help new students who find themselves floundering in the darkness of not knowing what to do or where to turn to. First year students are paired with a Mentor who has already been through all the trials and travails and there to offer advice and support. This assistance

can sometimes be the lifeline that can make the difference whether a student will succeed or not.

Pamela Waddell is one of these mentors and she says the experience couldn't be more fulfilling.

"Seeing the challenges overcome by not only my mentees but other mentors and mentees is very rewarding. Working with the peer-to-peer program has allowed me to meet other like minded individuals, and develop techniques for speaking with students in an attempt to provide encouragement and guidance.

There are over 1,200 students of Aboriginal ancestry at BCIT, which means that for virtually every course of study there is also a mentor. The First Nation's community here is close knit and we all have a vested interest in helping our brothers and sisters

find success. The workload at BCIT is notoriously insane, yet despite this fact, the mentors have proven time and again that they are willing to walk that extra mile and go out of their way to help.

"I have had two amazing mentees. Working with a mentee in my own program has been great as I can share experiences relevant to both of us. The mentorship program provides a great community for support and development," said Waddell.

In the end an Aboriginal mentor is more than just a tutor (although that is a role they often assume). They are a stepping stone, a shoulder to lean on, and a light to illuminate the path ahead. What makes the program different is the family environment fostered by the Aboriginal Services. The cornerstone is the close relationship that develops. We are all Indigenous people, and when one succeeds we all succeed.



## What Aboriginal students say about their BCIT experience



"When I needed to change careers to provide better for my family, BCIT was my first choice for an education. You get the knowledge and skills that you'll need to succeed in your future."

**Clarke Leckie**  
Electrical and Computer Engineering Technology  
School of Energy  
Kispiox First Nation



"The Medical Laboratory Science program at BCIT is an engaging and rewarding program. The programs in Health Sciences do a fantastic job at providing hands-on experience that will prove invaluable when entering the medical field."

**Erica Krauseneck**  
Medical Laboratory Science  
School of Health Sciences  
Oregon Jack Creek First Nation  
Kispiox First Nation



"Being a BCIT graduate is important to me because it validates my dedication, persistence, and ability to rise to challenges. It confirms to the industry that I'm job-ready."

**Kegan Belina**  
Business Information Technology Management  
School of Business  
Aboriginal Peer Mentor  
Student Association Councilor  
Kitwanga



## YOGA COMES TO ABORIGINAL SERVICES

BY AUSTIN GOODE

Yoga, a Hindu spiritual and ascetic discipline, a part of which, including breath control, simple meditation, and the adoption of specific bodily postures, is widely practiced for health and relaxation. This practice has made its way to Aboriginal Services thanks to Kimberly Balsillie. Kim, born and raised in Yellowknife, is about to get her Ecological Restoration degree. We had the opportunity to talk with Kim and ask her why she started teaching yoga at Aboriginal Services.

### What made you start teaching yoga at Aboriginal Services?

As a mentor of the aboriginal services, I thought ... what can I offer to people to help with their daily lives? Ahhh... I can teach my yoga and give some daily affirmation tips to help ease school/life stress.

### Why do you think it's important to teach students yoga?

Students here at BCIT have numerous exterior stressor and interior battles going on. Yoga helps calm the mind, brings the student inward, and helps them control and manage these stressor better.

### Do you think it's helping the students with their studies?

Yes, right after a session you can see the student open and relaxed in their

meditative sits. It is a beautiful thing to witness and know that from when they started the class the leaving they are feeling much better.

### Does it make you feel a sense of pride teaching others?

Of course! I would, however, say more sense of grounding and gratefulness.

### Are you going to continue doing this in the fall?

"Unfortunately, I am leaving as I am done my degree at the end of April 2015 here on campus. I will be setting the aboriginal services up with an online yoga access though to [myyogaonline.com](http://myyogaonline.com). This site allows you to have access 24/7, all forms of help guided yoga, meditation, etc. We have already done a class with two students using this and I walked around correcting their foundation and forms. This will be a great alternative until another yoga teacher offers to teach in the space."

It's students like Kim that represent Aboriginal Services in such a great way. Despite being swamped with classes and exams, Kim finds the time to help others. For that, Kim, we thank you and keep up the great work!







## HONOURING OUR GRADUATES



Please join BCIT Aboriginal Services for a remarkable evening dedicated to honouring and celebrating the success of 2014–2015 Aboriginal graduates.

Enjoy a catered dinner followed by the special unveiling of the Coast Salish house post, dedicated to BCIT's 50th anniversary.

**Wednesday, June 10, 2015**

Doors open at 4:50 p.m. (Gitxsan welcoming)

Buffet dinner begins at 5:30 p.m.

**BCIT, SW1 (Gateway Building)**  
3700 Willingdon Ave, Burnaby

Please RSVP by Friday, May 29th  
[aboriginalservices@bcit.ca](mailto:aboriginalservices@bcit.ca)  
604.432.8474



## NEW ABORIGINAL CULTURAL CLUB

BY AUSTIN GOODE

A group of Aboriginal students at BCIT have started an Aboriginal Cultural Club. It was important for Aboriginal Services to implement a platform between the advisory council and student association where students could share information. Through the hard work of staff, elders and students, the club is starting to evolve nicely.

The main purpose of the club is to connect BCIT students with each other, create employment opportunities, provide community outreach and promote cultural awareness.

Jordan Waunch, is part of the club and says the importance of it being established is huge for Aboriginal Services.

"I think it's important to have the club, because the Aboriginal members are changing the face of how people view Aboriginals. We come from all types

of backgrounds, and are involved in different programs. It's also a great way for Aboriginal students to become role models, and help guide the younger generation to follow a positive path, and that it is possible to overcome barriers and follow educational goals and at the same time stay connected with the Aboriginal community."

When the club was created a number of goals were outlined:

- > Connect students of BCIT through social activities and traditional Aboriginal teachings
- > Encourage and increase cultural awareness
- > Provide a platform to connect students with their heritage and teach those who would like to know more about their cultures

- > Build relationships between students and elders from within the community
- > Foster relationships that could provide students with employment opportunities upon graduating
- > Provide an artistic, social, educational, and cultural outlet for students and members of the community

The club is open to all students at BCIT and it's free of cost. Waunch feels it's a great way to learn about other cultures.

"It opens up the doors for the whole student body and people of other cultures and upbringings to learn about and participate in Aboriginal Culture."

The club will continue to grow and welcomes everyone to come see what it's all about. So don't be shy and stop by Aboriginal Services and learn more!





## A LEGACY BORN

BY AUSTIN GOODE

When Joanne approached Jillian and I about the idea of writing an Aboriginal newsletter, I didn't realize the impact it would have on my life. Nearly two years and four newsletters later and I can't begin to describe how rewarding it has been.

I have found a new passion in telling stories about Aboriginal issues and culture. Being able to tell the stories of my peers at BCIT and the amazing work their doing is truly inspirational. From teaching yoga, to travelling the world to pursue a career, these stories show how driven Aboriginal students at BCIT are.

The newsletter has evolved into a platform to show off what Aboriginal students are capable of and I feel honored to have been a part of it.

However, with all that being said, I'm most excited to see where the newsletter goes from here. I know I'm leaving it in good hands with my editing partner Ken Paulin taking charge. Ken is such a passionate individual and I know he's going to take this thing to the next level. It's now Ken's turn to find someone to tackle this project with him and continue the legacy. That's the beauty of this entire thing, it never has to end and the legacy of it can continue to grow and grow; there are no limits!

So I would like to thank Joanne and the rest of the staff at Aboriginal Services for this opportunity. What this project did for me will never be forgotten and It's made me proud to be of Aboriginal decent.



AUSTIN GOODE AND KEN PAULIN, BROADCAST AND MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS, BROADCAST AND ONLINE JOURNALISM

## EDITORS

Austin Goode

Ken Paulin

If you wish to be on the mailing list for this newsletter, please send us your name, address and e-mail.

Please pass on this copy to others who are interested in BCIT's Aboriginal Services. Thank you.

## MORE INFORMATION

Aboriginal Services

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