

# Ligaay gwii gina sk'aadGa 'láas ad Xaaydas gina Gan unsid – Enhancing Business Education with Indigenous Knowledge

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## Introduction

This 3-year transformation project was developed by Lauren Casey while employed at Ch'nook Indigenous Business Education, a unit of UBC Sauder. The project responds to the needs expressed by faculty and students to understand Indigenous perspectives on business more deeply and to improve how Indigenous topics are handled in classrooms.

## Project Context

Consistent with goals of furthering reconciliation found in UBC's Indigenous Strategic Plan, this project strives to strengthen business education through integration of Indigenous knowledge. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada *Calls to Action* #10, #62, #63 and #92 demand that educational institutions and industries decolonize our practices, include Indigenous voices & perspectives, and bring reconciliation into the forefront of our lives. To achieve this objective, the TLEF project team works with faculty and a range of partners to facilitate collaboration with Indigenous subject matter experts. The aim is to co-create content that is relevant to their disciplines and that integrates traditional knowledge systems. In addition to building connections between faculty and Indigenous experts, the TLEF team develops specific training opportunities for faculty to support their understanding of decolonial practice, cultural safety, and how to integrate Indigenous perspectives respectfully.

## Project Goals

### Curriculum Development

- Addressing 10 core courses of the Bcom program, ensure students develop cultural competency and have exposure to Indigenous perspectives on a range of topics
- In collaboration with Indigenous business leaders and experts, develop new curriculum resources and opportunities to bring Indigenous perspectives into the classroom. Examples include new business case studies, guest lectures and Q&A sessions, assignment development and support locating relevant Indigenous-created course content.

### Faculty Training

- Support faculty in their Indigenization efforts by providing high-quality training opportunities in Indigenous topics.
- Develop a scaffolded learning approach that establishes a baseline of cultural competency and grounding in decolonial principles, and build towards more niche topics.

### Resource Centre

- Create an online resource centre that collates relevant materials and facilitates further learning for faculty and students, supporting coursework and possible research directions

## Outputs & Outcomes

### Curriculum Development

- Changes to course content have been supported across 6 courses to date, including COMM 101, 105, 120, 196, 220 and 390.
- Estimated student reach is ~1200 students
- Activities have included guest lecture opportunities, the development of new assignments, changes to course materials, an Indigenous peer-mentorship program and engagement with students
- Students have demonstrated meaningful learnings from a subjective perspective. For example, following a guest lecture on entrepreneurship from CEO Jeff Ward, a student shared the following reflection:  
– “[Jeff] incorporated values and teachings from his culture in his company. I had never thought of the link between our culture and organizations we form. This was very insightful. Most entrepreneurs I have interacted with had more Westernized views, and I thought that was the only way to do business.” –

### Faculty Training

- Facilitated in-person training was delivered to 55 senior staff and faculty, in partnership with *Decolonize Together*, setting a baseline with key leaders and those working with Indigenous people.
- Hybrid training with *San'yas* continues, with 17 faculty participants currently enrolled.
- New, internally-developed Canvas modules launch Summer '23

### Resource Centre

- A library of 300+ resources has been assembled, and is in the process of categorization and site-mapping.

## Team

Many collaborators have contributed to the project thus far. The current team includes

- Mahesh Nagarajan, Principle Investigator
- Benjamin Wells, Project Manager
- Maria Jose Athie Martinez, Graduate Academic Assistant
- Brad Jackson – Project Assistant, Digital
- Fiona Kelly – Project Assistant, Resources
- Hypatia Behar-Gryl – Undergraduate Academic Assistant

## Acknowledgement

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- *Decolonize Together* for their training, guidance and consultation
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- *San'yas Anti-Racism Indigenous Cultural Safety Training Program* for training support and resources
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