

CONTINUING EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Trades Discovery for Homalco First Nation, Campbell River

Submitted by Donna Merry, Manager, Continuing Education

Continuing Education partnered with Homalco First Nation to deliver the Trades Discovery program in-community through the summer. The Nation was interested in providing a positive, uplifting experience for community members after a difficult spring season for the community when several young people lost their lives. The students and instructor worked throughout the program to create a new Youth Centre by fully refinishing an older building that had been stored for many years and had succumbed to wildlife infestation and water damage. The result is a bright and open space with new washroom facilities, new doors, floors and wall finishings and an accessible walkway. The students were involved in all aspects including the concrete work and new railing that you can see in the pictures. Further outcomes are increased confidence and skills in math and for two participants, a renewed commitment to complete high school. Five of the students are pictured, with the instructor, Neil Logan, far left and Brenda Murray on the left, a force-of-nature at Homalco who is also the training coordinator.





Youth Academy

Submitted by Donna Merry, Manager, Continuing Education

This summer, 220 youth participated in 13 summer camp sessions, exploring fine arts, Lego robotics (Bot camp), computer coding (Code Con), Jr robotics (Bot Jr), all girls bot camp and advanced Lego robotics (Bot Extreme). Camps were held across the NIC region including at Courtenay, Campbell River and Port Alberni campuses, in Sointula and in-community with Wei Wai Kum First Nation. Four young camp leaders and several younger assistants did an amazing job leading the camps while gaining leadership and work experience through engaging the participants in indoor and outdoor activities during their break times. NIC received grant funding from the Humber and Telus Foundations to help keep the prices affordable for Youth Academy this year. Continuing Education Program Officer Sherryl Eagle coordinated the summer programming and is shown below packing away a small amount of the equipment required for such a busy summer.



HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Accessible Education and Training (AET)

Submitted by Liz Girard, Department Chair/Instructor

Campbell River (CR) Campus: Students in the Employment Transition Cohort who will be awarded their certificates have had two terms of focused study and individualized work experience.

The students have a great sense of accomplishment as they all passed their WHMIS tests and have had successful and enjoyable work experience. The Accessible Education and Training (AET) Work Study Assistant did an amazing job in finding work placements that matched our students' interests and then supported them towards independence at each site. We've had students placed at a grocery store, a senior's centre, a museum, a firehouse, two non-profit organizations, and a senior's home. The diversity in our work experience options is absolutely essential to match the diverse abilities in our program.



As inclusion in the larger community is a goal for our department, students on the Campbell River campus have attended a Community Advisory Committee meeting and been on field trips to different local businesses. Our visit to the airport gave students an opportunity to advocate for accessibility within the business facilities while also building awareness of their abilities.



We have also worked hard to build bridges with our local high schools to create awareness of our program offerings. High school students were toured on campus by current students and joined us for classes where college students shared their experiences in the program. This is important because it helps build communications and community with others and it'll help our program in the long run because it promotes the important work and learning we do. Our current students are proud of our program as well as their individual accomplishments and are eager to share North Island College's Accessible Education & Training program with our larger community.

In the 2025-2026 academic year, we have 26 students enrolled throughout 13 courses, which is 10 more students than we had last year. Eight (8) of our students identify as Indigenous (seven (7) of those eight (8) are new this year). Supported by the Accessible Education and Training (AET) department, the nursing students are organizing a Community Resource Fair as part of their 4th year project. The Campbell River AET students will be hosting a diversability showcase in December, supported by the CARE2 grant with the theme: "A healthy community is a diverse community where all individuals are included".

Comox Valley (CV) Campus: We had a collaborative activity on September 17th with the Adventure Guiding class where we played get to know you games and then went for a walk in the forest. All students got a buddy from the opposite class and found out what they had in common. Plans are being made for a cross program snow shoe outing for interested students in the winter. The Adventure Guiding students are learning about diverseabilities, and how to support people with varying needs in the wilderness and our AET students are building inclusivity through participation in larger campus activities. (See photos below)

This cohort is also having the 4th year nursing placement students plan the Community Resource Fair in the Comox Valley which is happening November 24th from 1:45 to 5:00 PM at the Stan Hagen Theater.



Liz Girard leading AET and Adventure Guiding student in a group reflection



Gregg Cormie leading the AET and Adventure Guiding students in a group walk into the forest



The two groups together at the end of the activity

Bachelor of Science in Nursing Option C (BSN-OC)

Submitted by Maddison Paetz, Instructor

The LPN Access to BSN Education cohort is strengthening their knowledge through reconciliation, planetary health, and experiential, place-based learning initiatives. They are engaging with organizations such as the Canadian Association of Nurses for the Environment (CANE) and the Planetary Health Alliance to bring the latest scholarship and case studies directly into BSN classrooms. These learning opportunities will build their knowledge and support their transition to leaders within the Health Care system.

Bachelor of Science in Nursing Option A (BSN-OA)

Submitted by Hollaye MFarlen, Department Chair/Instructor

BSN Department - Environment & Innovation -One Textbook at a Time!

The Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) Department is making a move to electronic textbooks for several great reasons! We want to reduce our environmental footprint from the use of hardcover texts and delivery resources to make these available to faculty and students by moving to the offering of E-texts only in Semesters 1 and 2 of the BSN program. By collaborating with the publishers, we are able to offer students reduced pricing by packaging several textbooks as well as gaining many new student learning resources and faculty support materials all while promoting sustainable resource use and reducing our environmental footprint! The BSN Department will be

seeking further collaboration with other HHS programs to bring these benefits to a wider audience in the near future!

International Council of Nurses (ICN) Congress Conference – Helsinki 2025

In 2023 BSN faculty Cara Tilston, and Heidi Deagle attended the International Council of Nurses (ICN) Congress conference in Montreal. After the conference Cara and Heidi decided to put forward an abstract for a presentation for the 2025 ICN Congress Conference in Helsinki. Thanks to the NIC professional development funding we were able to attend and present our poster titled, “There is a Bat in the House: learning and teaching with a cultural humility mindset. Insights from Non-Indigenous nurse educators”.

This year’s theme, “Nursing power to change the world” was inspiring with over 5,000 nurses from around the world attending. Plenary sessions, workshops, and open forums with amazing presenters offered Cara, Heidi and Montana Alessio to explore and expand our knowledge through innovative experiences. These included creative simulations and a virtual experience (see photo below).

This experience, again, emphasized the importance and relevance of global health in our NIC/VIU curriculum.

Thank you, NIC for supporting our poster presentation and participation in this incredible learning opportunity. (Cara, Heidi, and Montana)



Cara Tilston, Montana Alessio, Heidi Deagle exploring the creative simulations and virtual experience simulation equipment.



Heidi Deagle and Cara Tilston poster presentation / Montana Alessio, Heidi Deagle, and Cara Tilston sampling the locally made confections

NUR 410: Health and Wellness in First Nations Communities – Field School

For one full week in June, 10 students, 2 BSN faculty, and Elder in Residence, Dr. Evelyn Voyageur, lived and learned in the remote coastal community of Rivers Inlet (Kitat) with the Wuikinuxv people. Following six weeks of an on-line learning journey, the group met in Port McNeil to board a chartered boat for the 3.5 hour journey across the Salish Sea. Participants included nursing students from both Vancouver Island University and NIC who selected this elective course as part of earning their degrees. Some of the many highlights included impactful sharing by Elders and other community members, learning about local history, harvesting plant medicines, witnessing the opening ceremony for a new cultural space (Nuyəmci), playing lahal in the Big House, seeing grizzly bears (from a good distance!) and co-hosting a diabetes education lunch. Immersive, community-based learning is transformative and irreplaceable by other teaching modes. We express our sincere gratitude to the community of Wuikinuxv; thank you for your generous welcome, guidance, partnership and wise teachings.

On April 19, 2025, Paul Willie transitioned to the spirit realm. Paul was a treasured Noxsola (wise one), known to many of us at NIC. Paul generously shared his cultural knowledge, language, life lessons and philosophical insights, particularly within the nursing program. Paul was a key collaborator in the creation of NIC's land-based, Indigenous-led field school (NUR 410), which began almost twenty years ago in Katit (Rivers Inlet), home of the Wuikinuxv peoples. Paul's direct involvement with NIC continued right until his passing. His guidance, presence and consulting work for the Learning Our Way CARTI research project were integral to the project. Paul co-facilitated the delivery of continuing education field schools in Rivers, Kingcome, T'saxis and with the KyuquotKa:'yu:'k't'h'/Che:k'tles7et'h' Nation. He was a thoughtful guide for the Learning Our Way team, ensuring ethical, community-focused research processes. We are grateful for his many contributions to NIC student's, faculty and communities.



Iris Faraklas, BSN Faculty / Group Forest Walk

Health Care Assistant (HCA)

Submitted by Donna Wedman, Department Chair/Instructor

The Health Care Assistant (HCA) program hosted six cohorts in the 2024-2025 academic year, with the last finishing their practice experience this month. Four cohorts are starting this fall between three campuses – Comox Valley NIC at St. Joe's, Campbell River, and Port Alberni, including our second group of Comox Valley NIC at St. Joe's international students through the Office of Global Engagement.

The instructors have been pursuing a variety of professional development activities, and we anticipate sharing more with each other over the coming year. Recently six of our current instructors were able to attend a workshop with Island Health to update on current best practices in safe patient handling techniques, which will be taught in the personal care skills labs at each campus.



A recent practice experience group / Instructors at Island Health Safe Patient Handling Workshop (group in action)

Human Services (HSW)

Submitted by Meredith McEvoy, Instructor/Program Coordinator

Village Analogy Project

"Using the Village Analogy to Structure a Course Journey; Student Perspectives of their Learning Experience", is an interdisciplinary research initiative between Human Services (HSW) and Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN). Co-led by Meredith McEvoy (HSW) and Heidi Deagle (BSN) from the NIC Faculty of Health and Human Services, the project was inspired by Meredith and Heidi's time spent in Houpsitas with NIC's Learning Our Way program. In their teaching, Meredith and Heidi used a map of Houpsitas Village as an analogy to structure course modules and a journey through the course, including, "Getting Ready for the Journey", and in-class trip journalling. This approach was piloted in courses SSW 122: Social Welfare in Canada and NUR 213: Professional Practice III – Nursing Ethics to investigate its impact on student learning. Preliminary results from this research indicate that using such a visual guide and Indigenous community analogy positively impacts student learning and helps integrate Indigenous realities and perspectives. These preliminary results were presented to the Faculty of Health and Human Services Appreciate Day event on June 9, 2025.



Human Services Curriculum Development

The Human Services Department has been working on integrating the results of their Program Review (including the External Review Report) into departmental changes and curriculum updates. The work includes development of a department Mission, Vision, and Values, and a description of the student journey through their programs represented by the different stages of salmon development in a river (i.e. Spawning ground, calm pools, riffles, rapids, estuary, ocean). The department has put forward updates to their curriculum to the Curriculum Committee including new program learning outcomes and updated course learning outcomes. In May 2025 the department met with the Working Together Working Group to consult and is working towards a single Indigenized Education Assistant and Community Support Certificate to be offered at the Comox Valley and Port Alberni campuses in both blended and digital delivery formats. We have appreciated the opportunity to participate in both Program Review and the Quality Assurance Process Audit (at NIC in Fall 2023) to help us continue to improve the quality student learning experience for our students.

Values

	Cultural Responsiveness
	Relational Practice
	A Community of Belonging
	Decolonization, Anti-Oppression, Equity, and Social Justice
	Humility, Accountability, and Restorative Justice



TRADES AND TECHNICAL PROGRAMS

Report to BOG

And we're back! But truthfully, faculty and staff in Trades and Technical programs never left. While June brought a much-needed break for sun and relaxation for many across all NIC campuses, TNT carried on into and over the summer months.

Let's Recap!

Chef Xavier Bauby and Chef Jonathan Frazier wrapped up the Professional Cook Level 2 program at the end of June with Chef Jonathan pinch hitting for Chef X while he and his students were experiencing the Japanese culture across the globe.

Instructor Brent DiGiuseppe's Electrical Foundation began at the end of January with students making their exit in early July. Ryan McElroy, instructing Carpentry Foundation and Jacques Gartner delivering Plumbing Foundation released their students July 11th while Welding Foundation students hung in there until August 14th earning the envy of the Automotive Foundation students who did not make their exit until the 22nd.

That makes 1 Apprenticeship program (PC2) and 5 Foundations whose students put their dedication to succeed over the temptation cut and run for the lazy days of summer. But wait...there's one more! Instructor Kyle Ward jumped into Heavy Mechanical Foundation in February and he's still going strong with 16 students well on their way to a lucrative career in a highly sought-after Trade.

Our Culinary Business Operations Diploma students were well represented at convocation and we were thrilled to spend time with Chef Allan who joined us for the celebration.



So, what does the 2025 Fall term look like for Trades and Technical program? Well, here we go...

Let us start with our colleagues at the TEBO campus in Port Alberni. Instructor Jim Stratford has a full combined cohort of Welding Foundation students and “continuous entry” Welder “B” Level students. For anyone who is not familiar with how the “continuous entry” cohorts work, they are basically set up so NIC can accommodate both employers and apprentices who are working and not always able to conform to a “set” schedule due to projects and employee availability. This allows students to achieve their required certifications while not inconveniencing or jeopardizing employer commitments to jobsite timelines.

Next, we move on to our Automotive Foundation program under new instructor Dan Brochu – who is profiled at the end of the report - and Furniture Design & Joinery Foundation with Stephen McIntosh. TEBO is hopping!

The Trades Training building at the Courtenay campus has students in every classroom. September 2nd started with Jacques Gartner and Level 1 Plumbing apprenticeship; Ryan McElroy has a Carpentry Level 2 cohort along with Rob Laird and his Carpentry Level 3 students followed by Erik Hardin and his Level 4 apprentices who will achieve their Carpentry Red Seal certification after the successfully writing their SkilledTradesBC inter-provincial exam. The end of October we start again with Carpentry Levels 1, 2 & 4, while Plumbing apprentice levels 1 & 2 will also be running new cohorts into December.

And here we are at the Campbell River campus. Our Foundation programs have healthy cohorts in Welding, Automotive and Electrical and each have substantial wait lists which our Faculty anticipated given the present labour market. The Coastal Forest Certificate and Diploma programs are boasting 18 students while Professional Cook 1 and Culinary Operations Certificate programs have 12 students who will be making their way to the kitchen to put their theory into practice – and they never disappoint!

While Kyle Ward is nearing completion of his foundation program, the Heavy Duty Equipment Technician apprenticeships are just getting ramped up! Matt Wheatley’s cohort of Level 1 students and Byron Beaupre’s cohort of Level 2 students began at the beginning of the fall term and, with very little time in between, will be followed with an additional Level 3 and Level 2 in November. Electrical instructors are on their toes with Apprenticeship Levels 1, 3 and 4 September start-ups while November and December will meet the demands for Level 2 and new Level 4 students.

If you lost track along the way here’s a quick snapshot of what is happening in Trades for Fall 2025 across the NIC campuses:

- 6 Foundation Programs
- 2 Coastal Forest Programs
- 2 Culinary Arts Programs
- 20 Apprenticeship Programs

Another Exciting Development

Faculty has launched - with great success - the implementation of enhanced employability skill programming across Foundation and Level One Apprenticeship programs.

While core trades curriculum varies greatly from trade to trade there are core essential employability competency requirements across all trades programs. The faculty has developed core curricula to support new entrants into the trades while providing students with consistent foundational skills which are transferable across their training levels, their job site, and personal

life. The required competencies have been identified, and resources have been compiled into SCORM and Brightspace packages. With comprehensive curriculum now developed, our Coordinator of Trades and Technical Programs has now deployed this programming and we are proud to outline that we have instituted consistency in key and vital areas, such as safety, math review, rigging, hoisting, crane signals, ladders, scaffolding, communication, mentoring, and self-care, which is of utmost importance in both the theory and practical platforms .

We also have more on our Seaweed program, which is detailed below by Paris Gaudet.

The Faculty is very proud and pleased to be launching the second offering of NIC's Seaweed Program – Drawing global interest!

Seaweed education is thriving at North Island College. As the only post-secondary institution in Canada dedicated to seaweed-specific skills training and applied learning, NIC's Seaweed Production and Processing Program continues to make waves. The second delivery of the program has been a resounding success, reflecting growing interest in sustainable marine industries. Led by the Faculty of Trades and Technical Programs in collaboration with the Centre for Applied Research, Technology and Innovation (CARTI), the program exemplifies the powerful connection between hands-on training, industry engagement, and applied research.

Applications opened on May 20, 2025, and were actively promoted across NIC's social media channels. Program Officer Paris Gaudet hosted three virtual information sessions on June 3, 11, and 19, drawing over 200 registrants. In total, 160 applications were received from across Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Eastern Canada, and internationally including Scotland, Washington State, Oregon, and California.

Forty students were accepted into the 12-week online program, which launched on August 18, 2025. The curriculum includes two immersive, hands-on learning experiences:

- Port Hardy Applied Learning Week (September 22–26): Students will be based at NIC's Muxalakwila campus, engaging directly with the coastal ecosystems of northern Vancouver Island. This experience supports regional relationship-building, student engagement, and success, especially for learners from the Mt. Waddington region. Students will also participate in discussions with First Nations in the area to explore the cultural significance of seaweed and traditional harvesting practices. The week highlights the potential for advancing sustainable economic opportunities through seaweed production in remote coastal communities.
- West Coast Applied Learning Week (October 6–10): Students will travel to Tofino and Ucluelet to learn from First Nations and industry leaders about seaweed harvesting, processing, and its role in local economies. The week includes cultural learning sessions focused on traditional knowledge and the ecological importance of seaweed in West Coast marine environments.

The program concludes on November 7, 2025, equipping graduates with the skills and knowledge to contribute meaningfully to the growing seaweed sector.

What else have we been up to?

Every year, prior to kicking into high gear, the Trades and Technical programs faculty and staff have our annual Faculty Meeting where we get together to review and discuss our programs and procedures, review updates in guidelines, policy, funding and student matters while engaging in lively conversations on what is working and what could use some improvement, and to hear suggestions and input from our team members that can enhance the NIC experience for our Trades and Technical students. This year we had an amazing turnout and talks were both informative and productive. But we also added a little bit of fun to the mix with some friendly competition. Lunch was organized by Melody White and her fabulous Caf staff...the catch...assembly was required! It was Build-A-Bear PIZZA-STYLE! The kitchen was a hub of activity as our hungry amateur Italianos demonstrated their culinary prowess.

Top winners were Joe Fornari (not fair, he really is Italian), Rob Laird and Jonathan Frazier. But if we are being honest, there were no leftovers!



The Faculty hosted our third dual credit student welcome and informational meeting on September 5 at the Campbell River campus. These informational meetings were launched Fall 2024 with great success thus the model continues to be rolled out for the start of each semester. Representatives from student services and student affairs joined our faculty and school district reps to provide dual credit learners with a customized orientation as they transition from High School to the College. The dedicated sessions provide the opportunity to welcome youth as college students while articulating the college requirements, expectations, and overall program rigor.

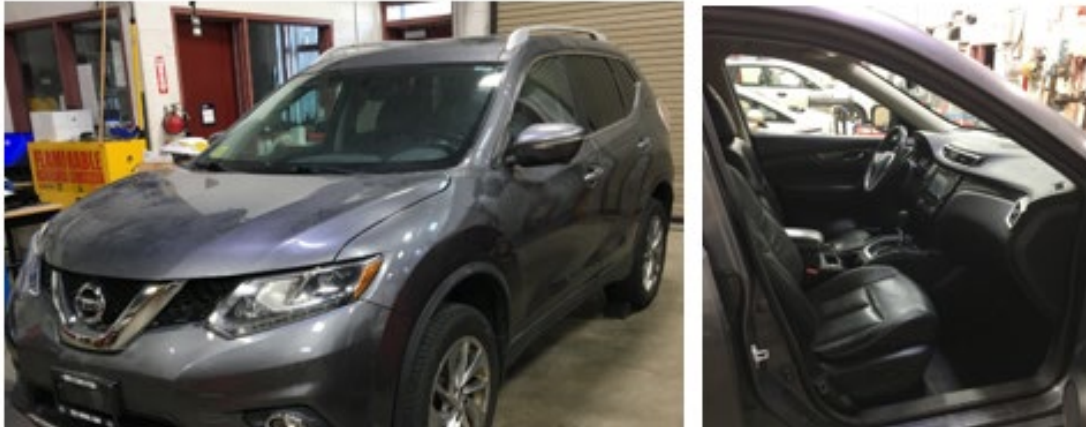
North Island Nissan Supports Automotive Service Technician Program

We are pleased to share that Mike Ball and North Island Nissan in Campbell River have generously donated a Nissan Rogue to our Automotive Service Technician program.

This gift reflects their strong commitment to education and the skilled trades. By providing our students with access to current industry vehicles, this donation enhances hands-on learning and ensures our graduates are well prepared to meet the demands of today's automotive sector.

Partnerships like this highlight the incredible impact community collaboration has in creating opportunities for students, strengthening our programs, and building a brighter future for the trades.

A sincere thank you to Mike Ball and the North Island Nissan team for their generosity and vision in supporting our students and programs.



A New Addition

Please welcome Dan Brochu to the Faculty of Trades and Technical Programs. Dan is our newest team member as Automotive Instructor at our Port Alberni TEBO campus. Dan has both a Red Seal Endorsement and a Blue Seal Endorsement from the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology where he was also an instructor for 19 years. During that time he successfully obtained his Bachelor of Business Administration Degree while completing several self-improvement courses including Becoming a Master Instructor, Coaching for Improvement, Effective Leadership and Communication Skills, Building Trust and many more. Dan will be teaching the foundation program over the next year but he also has experience in the Apprenticeship Levels. He is passionate about his career and he is passionate about sharing his experience with his students. We can't think of a better fit, welcome Dan!



The Faculty of Trades and Technical Programs would also like to announce Geoff Marr as the new Senior Administration Specialist. Geoff stepped into this position with ease, bringing an impressive educational background. Geoff began at NIC with the Electronics Technician Program and moved on to Simon Fraser University to achieve a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature and History followed by his Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction in 2020. Geoff has integrated his enthusiasm for education and technology in the Senior Administration Specialist role touting a wealth of technical knowledge complimented by extensive understanding in curriculum design, evaluation, and implementation at a post-secondary level. His strong communication skills allow him to connect effectively and thoughtfully with students and colleagues given his diverse background. Among his other notable achievements he holds an Independent School Teaching Certificate and is a Youth Program Volunteer. (and he's a sharp dresser!) Geoff, we are so happy to have you on our team!

Have a great fall everyone!

OFFICE OF GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT**Office of Global Engagement Update**

Submitted by Mark Herringer, Executive Director, International Education

The Office of Global Engagement is entering the 4th year of its Indigenizing international education plan, Journeying Together. You can find the year 3 annual report and dashboard here: <https://www.nic.bc.ca/about/global-engagement/index.html>. We are collecting the many stories that students and faculty have shared over the last few years in order to make them available on our web site – stay tuned.

In Japan, two of our Culinary Arts students, guided by their instructor and supported by a staff member, participated in a 2-week culinary arts field school with students and staff at Kapi'olani Community College in Hawai'i and Nakamura Gakuen University, in Fukuoka Japan. Together, they learned not only cooking techniques, but the deeper teachings that food carries about land, local stories, and tradition.

One NIC student traveled to France to University Savoie Mont Blanc, to complete one year in the double degree program, while two other NIC students are engaged in a semester abroad activities in France and Japan. All NIC students travelling abroad have received the One World International Scholarship through BC Scholarship Society.

In turn, NIC received 10 students on short term exchange, from France, Chile, Mexico, Vietnam, Japan, and Tunisia. Most of those students are staying in the new student residences.

We were also grateful to welcome a delegation from Kenya through the KBEST project with CICan. Their visit is part of knowledge sharing, and honoring each other's experiences, and exploring ways of collaboration.

OGE held another successful new international student orientation. This fall we are welcoming 68 new students (regular and exchange) from 19 countries into programs like Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, Social Services, Criminology, Health Care Assistant, Early Childhood Care and Education, Culinary, Business, Digital Design and Development and Fine Arts.

Study abroad story shared by Laurie Tulloch (ECCE) on behalf of Roberta Wesley:

Sharing this wonderful story today with you with Roberta's permission.

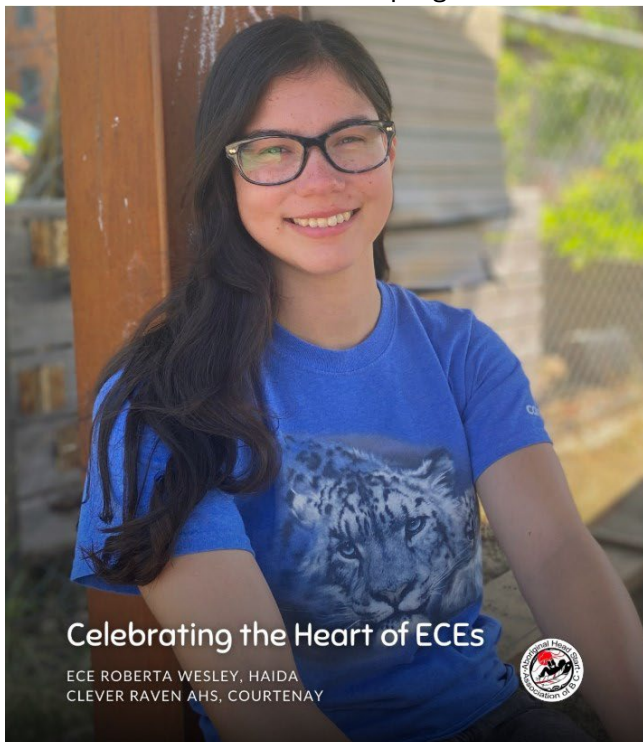
Roberta entered our program knowing about her indigeneity on only one side of her family. At the end of her certificate year she applied to enter the Diploma Program and was a successful applicant to our Early Childhood Field School to New Zealand which we shared with students and faculty from 3 other colleges.



In our pre-trip sessions we prepared our introductions to our fellow travelers and hosts while cedar weaving with Evelyn Voyageur. Roberta started asking questions about her unknown family connections and began to research with information Evelyn was able to share. I'll never forget the day Roberta excitedly shared she had found her village! At the same time Roberta began her infant toddler practicum at the Clever Raven Aboriginal Head Start Program.

On our first day in New Zealand Roberta introduced herself including her newfound Kincolith (Gingolx) identity and one of the students from Coast Mountain College replied, "We could be family!" A zoom call back to Canada later, Roberta had met her close relatives and spent the rest of the field school learning beside a distant cousin she didn't know she had. Earlier this week the following popped up on Facebook celebrating the heart of ECE's with "Auntie Roberta" who is now a practicing Head Start infant toddler educator.

'just one example of the importance of international indigenous learning experiences in our early childhood care and education programs and its' lasting impacts!



Celebrating the Heart of ECEs

ECE ROBERTA WESLEY, HAIDA
CLEVER RAVEN AHS, COURTENAY



STUDENTS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Updates from Student Life & Housing

Submitted by Meesbah Jiwaji, Associate Director, Student Life & Housing



Fall 2025 Orientation

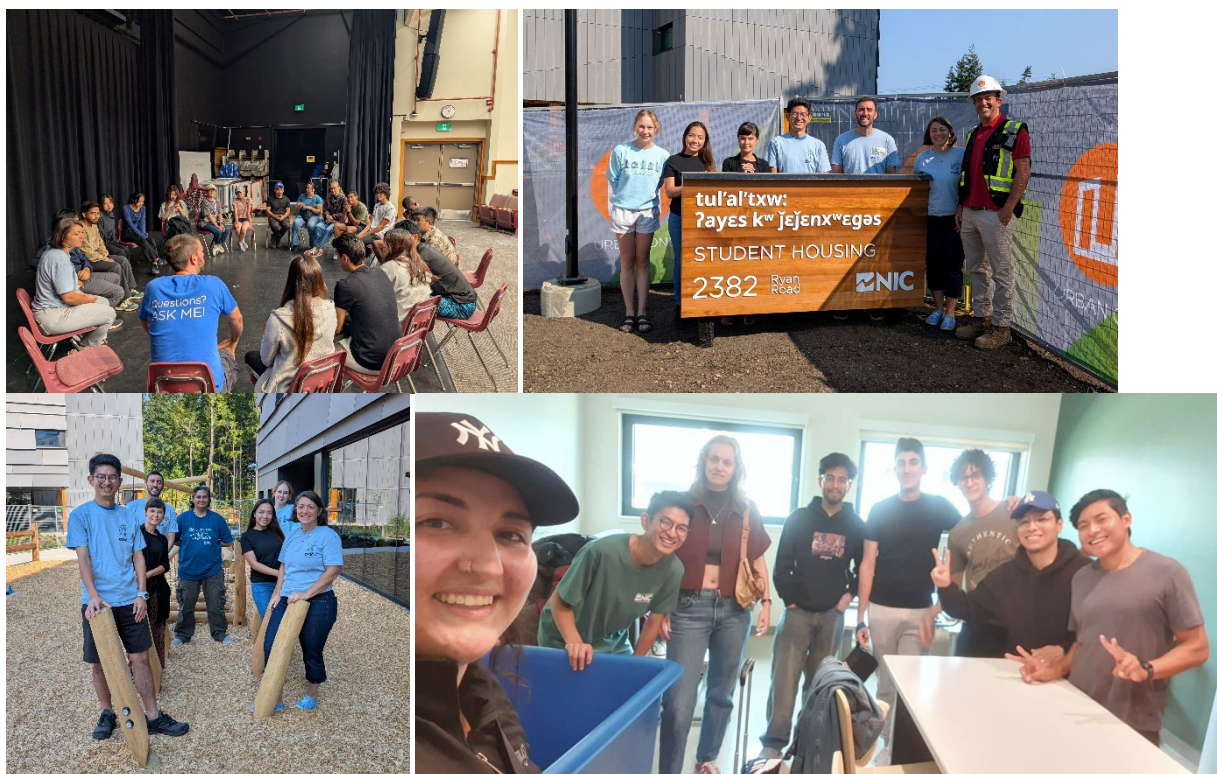
This fall, NIC welcomed new and returning students through a series of engaging orientation activities, offered both virtually and in person across campuses. Rather than centering on a single large gathering, the focus was on smaller conversations and student-centered interactions designed to surface needs, build connections, and foster a sense of belonging from day one. This intentional approach ensured students had early access to resources, peer networks, and staff support as they began their studies.



Student Housing Opening

This September, NIC reached a major milestone with the opening of its first on-campus student housing community. The journey to opening required flexibility, collaboration, and a strong commitment to students. When construction delays meant housing units were not ready at the start of term, the housing team mobilized to provide temporary accommodations in ʔayəs kʷ ʃəɣən xʷəgəs, the family building, and at the Holiday Inn, while ensuring that students still had access to housing orientation, community-building activities, and ongoing support.

The formal opening was celebrated with the K'ómoks First Nation, members of the Ministry, alongside NIC leadership, staff, and students. The event underscored housing as a culturally safe, welcoming, and inclusive space, one designed not only to meet immediate housing needs but also to foster belonging, wellbeing, and student success. With the doors now open, housing will become a hub for connection and learning, guided by NIC's values and grounded in strong relationships with Indigenous partners and the wider community.



Early Assist 2024–25

The Early Assist program continues to serve as a cornerstone of student support and retention at NIC. Between Fall 2024 and Spring 2025, 298 referrals were made (4% of NIC’s total student headcount), reflecting sustained engagement with the program. While most referrals came from faculty and staff, self-referrals are increasing, a sign of student awareness and self-advocacy. Referrals often combined academic and well-being concerns, underscoring the value of Early Assist as a holistic safety net. Students were most often connected to Counselling, Accessible Learning, Advising, and Financial Aid, highlighting the cross-campus collaboration that keeps students enrolled, supported, and on track for completion.

Referrals also reflected the diversity of NIC’s student body. International students represented nearly one-third of referrals overall, rising to 39% in winter. Indigenous students accounted for 21% of referrals in fall, with smaller numbers in later terms, while dual credit students consistently engaged, representing 1–3% of referrals across terms. These patterns emphasize the reach of Early Assist across different student groups and the importance of culturally responsive, targeted support strategies.

Healthy Trades Report

The Healthy Trades program expanded its reach and impact this year, addressing the unique wellness needs of trades students across all three NIC trades campuses. Highlights include:

- 20 Lunch + Learn sessions on topics ranging from harm reduction to study skills, with 374 participants;
- Free access to 19 recreation facilities, used over 2,800 times by 321 students, to support physical wellness;
- 68 trades student leaders engaged in peer leadership initiatives;
- 61 orientation visits and 19 end-of-program sessions, ensuring every trades cohort connected with NIC and community supports.

Healthy Trades also worked closely with Early Assist, with trades students accounting for 72 referrals (7% of decanal headcount). This close alignment reinforces how wellness programming supports retention and completion. The program continues to reduce stigma around mental health, strengthen community partnerships, and create trusted connections with trades students, helping them succeed in demanding programs and transition confidently into the workforce.