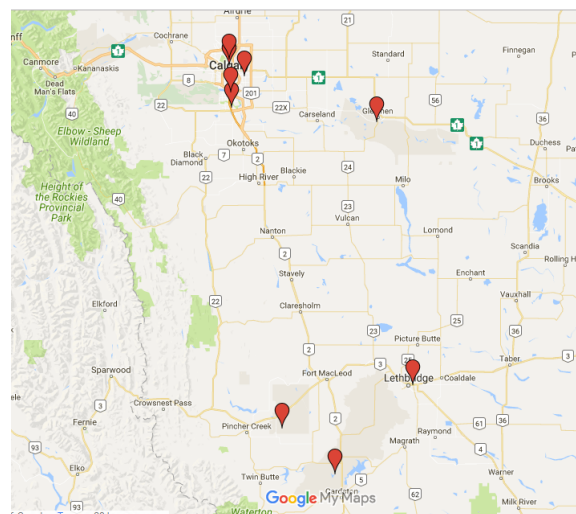
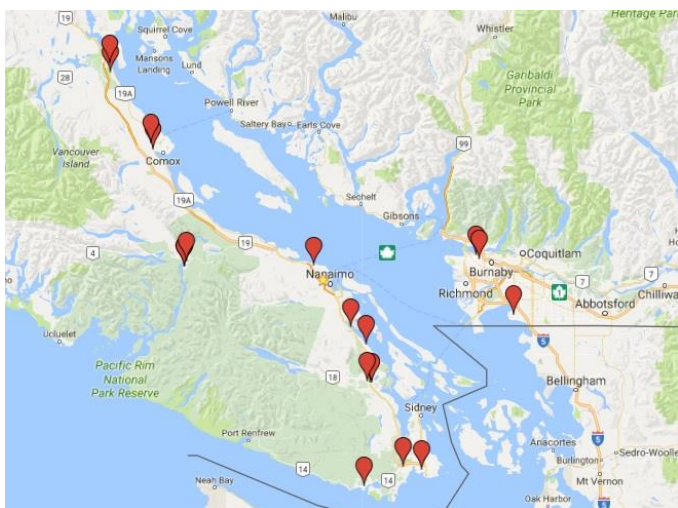


**IN.BUSINESS PACIFIC REGION OPENING CONFERENCE
NOVEMBER 18-19, 2016, VANCOUVER ISLAND UNIVERSITY, NANAIMO, BRITISH COLUMBIA**

In.Business: A National Mentorship Program for Indigenous Youth is a mentorship program that uses social media, mobile technology, Indigenous mentors, and in-person conferences to educate Indigenous high school students about business. In.Business was established in 2011 by the Purdy Crawford Chair in Aboriginal Business Studies at Cape Breton University (CBU). This small Nova Scotia pilot initially comprised of 30 students and six mentors has since expanded and now operates in five regions across Canada (Atlantic, Eastern, Central, Pacific and Northern). In.Business is made possible by the generous financial support from Indigenous and Northern Affairs and various other governments, private, and corporate contributors.

The Journey

The Pacific region includes students, mentors, and peer mentors from British Columbia and Alberta. This year the Pacific Region also accepted applications from both the Yukon and Northwest Territories. From September to October, presentations were made at 25 high schools, 2 school boards and 1 youth organization across the region. Applications to the In.Business program were received from 112 students attending 39 high schools. Following the application process, which involved evaluating students' two-page application and a recommendation form, 50 students were selected with representation from 28 high schools from British Columbia, Alberta (shown below) and the Northwest Territories (not shown), and representing 24 Indigenous communities. Forty-eight students attended the opening conference in Nanaimo, BC. Leading up to the opening conference, students introduced themselves electronically via the In.Business Facebook group. Upon arrival, the day before the conference, students made their own name tags, met in their mentoring groups to come up with a group name and took part in "Minute to Win It" games where the groups competed against each other.



LOCATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA SCHOOLS

LOCATION OF ALBERTA SCHOOLS

DAY 1 HIGHLIGHTS

A warm welcome was given by Vancouver Island University Elder in Residence, Gary Manson to the traditional territory of the Snuneymuxw First Nation. The Honourable Judith Guichon, BC Lieutenant Governor; the Honourable John Rustad, BC Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation; the Honourable Michelle Stilwell, BC Minister of Social Development and Social Innovation; and Vancouver Island University President, Ralph Nilson were in attendance and

gave opening remarks to students and guests. During lunch, students listened to Tracy Samra, Chief Administrative Officer of the City of Nanaimo and a proud member of the Saddle Lake Cree Nation, talk about her current work and previous work within First Nation communities. In the afternoon, students took a tour of Vancouver Island University, which included a tour of the Faculty of Management and the Witness Blanket, a nationally recognized and thought-provoking contemporary art installation about the impacts of Canada's Residential School era. In the evening, students were treated to an inspiring talk and performance from Sirreal, a local hip-hop artist, click [here](#) to see more.

Intro Videos – Prior to the conference, students were asked to prepare a short video introducing themselves to the group. With very little guidelines for this challenge, students were asked to explain a little bit about themselves, their community, and why they applied for this program. The videos provided an opportunity for students and mentors to learn about the other people they would be interacting with for the next several months. The videos were very well done! To see for yourself, click [here](#)!

DAY 2 HIGHLIGHTS

Day 2 kicked off with students listening to 26 year-old start-up entrepreneur Ali Taghikhani talk about how he overcame personal barriers and launched his successful company Synapseint, a human resources company focused on providing specialized employees for the high-tech industry. Next, Vancouver Island University BBA Advisor and professor Bryan Webber led students in a fun business game modelled after the famous TV game show, 'Jeopardy'. In the afternoon students got back in their teams for the Pitch Team Challenge followed by the presentation of the Purdy Awards before they returned home.

Pitch It! Contest – In the business world, getting approved for a loan is sometimes a very competitive process. Students were instructed to work in their groups with the guidance of a mentor to develop a pitch for an innovative business idea. Each group worked together to brainstorm ideas for their proposal and then made a 2-minute pitch. Under the mentorship of Norma Wolf Child, the "Piita Tribe" won the Pitch It team challenge. Their winning idea, called Splash and Dash Boating, is their take on Uber for water. Members of the winning team (pictured from l-r) included: Connor McKay Forest Lawn; Norma Wolf Child, Alina Crow, Piikani Nation Secondary School; Shelby Provost, Piikani Nation Secondary School; Deja Red Crow, Central Catholic High School; Chase Cardinal, Lord Beaverbrook High School; Nicole North Peigan, Centennial High School; Alyssa Husak, Lord Beaverbrook High School.



The "Purdy Awards" were first handed out at our inaugural opening conference back in 2012. They are named after the late Purdy Crawford and are awarded at each conference to recognize special contributions to the program by students. The recipients of the Purdy Awards at the 2016/17 Pacific region opening conference were: (pictured from l-r in the front) Jenna Furlong, Diamond Jeness Secondary School; Hayley Hemstead; Robron Outreach School Emma Paul, Esquimalt High School; Roy Louie, Esquimalt High School; Emily St. Cyr, Elgin Park Secondary School and in the back; Koren Bear, Pacific Regional Manager and Jaylene Olebar, Duncan Christian School



WHAT'S NEXT?

Until the group comes together again in May 2017, social media and various apps will be relied upon to keep students connected with their mentors and each other. Each student has been paired with a mentor and placed in a group with five to seven other students. Students will be working on bi-weekly business challenges facilitated by their mentors. The main goal of this program is to help our students explore business opportunities and ultimately entice them to study business in the future. After spending a few days together, we are well on our way!

The 2016/2017 Pacific region has representation from the following Indigenous communities:

Alberta: Saddle Lake Cree Nation, Siksika First Nation, Kainai Blood Indian Reserve, Piikani Nation

British Columbia: Ahousaht, Cook's Ferry Indian Band, Cowichan, Ditidaht, Homalco, Kainai, Kispiox, Lax kw'alaams, Nuchatlaht, Nuxalk, Pauquachin, Shushwap, Squamish, Stz'uminus, Tseshaht

Other Provinces and Territories: Muskowekwan, SK; Piapot, SK; Tall Cree, AB, Tootinaowaziibeeng, MB, Ross River, YT

The 2016/2017 Pacific region has representation from the following schools:

Alberta: Central Catholic High School, Centennial High School, Forest Lawn High School, John G. Diefenbaker, Kainai High School, Lord Beaverbrook High School, Piikani Nation Secondary School, Siksika High School

British Columbia: ADSS, Belmont Secondary School, Britannia Outreach, Carihi Secondary School, Chemainus Open Learning, Cowichan Secondary School, Cowichan Valley Opening Learning Centre, Dover Bay Secondary, Duncan Christian School, Edward Milne Community School, Elgin Park Secondary School, Esquimalt Secondary School, G.P. Vanier Secondary School, Ladysmith Secondary School, Mark R. Isfeld Secondary School, Robron Outreach School, Vancouver Technical High School, VAST, Westshore Learning Centre

Northwest Territories: Diamond Jenness Secondary School

Pictured below is a group photo of Pacific region students.



To view profiles, refer to our website:

[Students](#) | [Mentors](#)



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In.Business: A National Mentorship Program
for Indigenous Youth



Purdy Crawford Chair

Web

www.cbuinbusiness.ca