



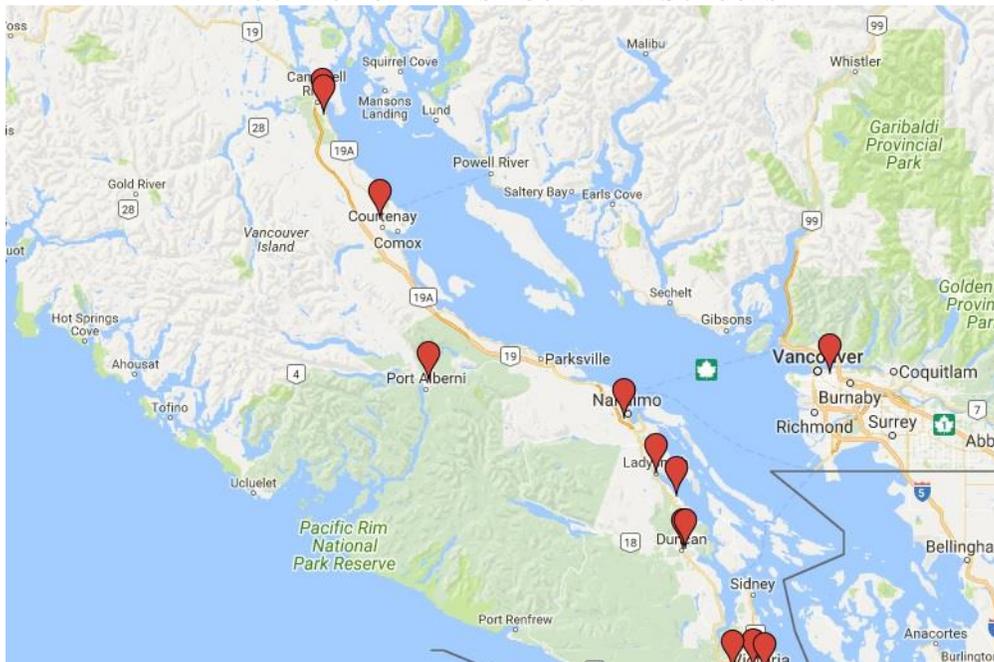
**IN.BUSINESS PACIFIC REGION OPENING CONFERENCE
NOVEMBER 17, 2017, VANCOUVER ISLAND UNIVERSITY, NANAIMO, BRITISH COLUMBIA**

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 across Canada. The following institutions have partnered with CBU to deliver In.Business: Nipissing University, Lakehead University, the University of Winnipeg, First Nations University, the University of Calgary, and Vancouver Island University. 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 (BC) and Alberta (AB); however, this year we decided to hold separate programs in both provinces. This allowed the program to focus recruitment regionally, as well as increase the number of students accepted in each province. Recruitment in BC was focused on Vancouver Island and between October and November presentations were made at 18 high schools. Applications to the In.Business program were received from 69 students attending 17 high schools. Following the application process, which involved evaluating students' two-page application and a recommendation form, 40 students were selected with representation from 13 high schools in British Columbia (shown below), and representing 14 Indigenous communities. In the end, 28 students attended the opening conference in Nanaimo, BC. Currently, there are 31 students in the program.

LOCATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA SCHOOLS



HIGHLIGHTS

Upon arrival, students listened to welcoming remarks from Gary Manson, Elder in residence, VIU; Bryan Webber, Associate Dean, Faculty of Management, VIU; and Sheila Malcolmson, MP, Nanaimo-Ladysmith. In the morning, students gathered in their mentoring groups and took part in a social media challenge in which they took pictures around VIU's campus and posted them to social media. After the social media challenge, students listened to Heather Burke, Aboriginal Recruiter, VIU explain the services offered to Indigenous students on campus.



In the afternoon, students got to watch their peers' introductory 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!](#)

After watching the introductory videos, students got back in their groups for the Pitch It! Contest, which was judged by Bryan Webber, Associate Dean and Andrea Martin, BBA Academic Advisor for the Faculty of Management, VIU.

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 Kyle Sangret, the “Red Tribe” won the Pitch It! Contest.



The Red Tribe's winning idea was a clothing design company featuring Indigenous artists, called Island Footprints Clothing. This company was also a social enterprise with a portion of the profits going to help alleviate homelessness on Vancouver Island. Members of the winning team (pictured from l-r) included: Kyle Sangret, mentor (and VIU business grad); Tyana Charlie, Cowichan Secondary School; Sadie Hatt, Victoria High School; Wyatt Rodgers, Esquimalt High School; Clark Johnny Jr., Duncan Christian School; and Rosala Jack, Cowichan Secondary School.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Until the group comes together again in April 2018, social media and various apps will be relied upon to keep students connected with their mentors and each other. Each student has been placed in a group with five to seven other students, and each group is assigned a mentor. 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 practices and ultimately entice them to study business in the future. After spending time together at the opening conference, we are well on our way!

The 2017-2018 Pacific region, in British Columbia, has representation from the following Indigenous communities:

British Columbia: Ahousaht, Nuchatlaht, Cook's Ferry Indian Band, Esquimalt, Cowichan, Penelakut, Stz'uminus, Ucluelet, We Wai Kai Nation, and We Wai Kum

Other Provinces and Territories: Norway House

The 2017-2018 British Columbia program has representation from the following schools:

British Columbia: ADSS, Britannia Outreach, Carihi Secondary School, Chemainus Secondary School, Cowichan Secondary School, Duncan Christian School, Esquimalt High School, G.P. Vanier Secondary School, John Barsby Secondary School, Ladysmith Secondary School, Robron Outreach School, Westshore Learning Centre, and Victoria High School. Pictured below is a group photo of the BC students.



To view profiles, click on the following links

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



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