**REPORT**

**Indigenous Graduate Student Roundtable**

**“Truth to Power: Indigenous Scholarship in Canada”**

**Held on April 17th, 2015**

**First People’s House**

**University of Victoria**

**Kelly Aguirre**

**with Alison DuBois**

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**1) List of Organizers and Participants**

Co-Organizers:

* Kelly Aguirre (PhD Candidate, Political Science): kaguirre@uvic.ca
* Alison DuBois (PhD Student, Interdisciplinary): adubois@uvic.ca

Moderator:

* Art Napoleon (Master, Indigenous Language Revitalization, UVic)

Keynote Speaker:

* Dr. Kathy Absolon (Associate Professor, Program Coordinator of Aboriginal Field of Study, Wilfred Laurier University)

Elders:

* May and Skip Sam, Tsartlip First Nation

Event Ushers (INAF Le’nonet Program):

* Nicole Mandryk and Cole Sayers (Undergraduate students, UVic)

Videographer:

* Dr. Sarah Wiebe (ISICUE, UVic)

Roundtable Participants:

* Kelly Aguirre (PhD Candidate, Political Science, UVic)
* Calvin G. Claxton (MA Student, Indigenous Language Revitalization, UVic)
* Alison DuBois (PhD Student, Interdisciplinary, UVic)
* Angela Easby (MA Student, Environmental Studies, UVic)
* Ron George (MED Student, Education, UVic)
* Erynne Gilpin (PhD Candidate, Indigenous Governance, UVic)
* Aaron Mills (PhD Candidate, Law, UVic)
* David Parent (Entering MA Program, Indigenous Studies, UAlberta)
* Jesse Recalma (MA Student, Interdisciplinary, UVic)
* Kerry Sloan (PhD Student, Law, UVic)
* Ruth Young (MA Student, Interdisciplinary, UVic)

Also present for portions of the day were members of the Office of Indigenous Affairs, Associate Dean of Social Sciences Dr. Rosaline Canessa, Associate Dean of Graduate Studies Dr. Claire Carlin and Communications Officer for the Faculty of Social Sciences Anne MacLaurin.

**2) Background and Description of the Event**

**Background:**

 In partnership with the Canadian Association of Graduate Studies (CAGS) and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) an Indigenous Graduate Student Round Table was held on Friday April 17, 2015 at the University of Victoria as part of a SHHRC and CAGS funded roundtable process to generate discussion and feedback on the Imagining Canada’s Future Initiative and Future Challenge research ares. Organized by Indigenous doctoral students Alison DuBois and Kelly Aguirre over a three week period the day-long round table took place in the Ceremonial Hall at the University of Victoria’s First People’s House on campus. Individual support from Indigenous faculty members included Dr. Heidi K Stark (Associate Professor, Political Science) and Dr. Robina Thomas (Director, Indigenous and Community Engagement) was instrumental in ensuring administrative matters were attended to in a timely manner. Round table co-organizers publicly acknowledged the following Deans for their support throughout the pre-planning, design and implementation of the round table, including Dean Jeremy Webber (Law), Dean David Capson (Graduate Studies), Dean Katherine Krull (Social Sciences), Dean John Archibald (Humanities) and Dean Mary Ellen Purkis (Human and Social Development).

 The organizers decided to focus the theme of the roundtable on Indigenous post-secondary experience at the University of Victoria as well as challenges and opportunities graduate students see within the institution of the University more broadly for research by and for Indigenous peoples and communities, including supports available for their scholarship by funding bodies such as SSHRC. As such we titled the event “Truth to Power: Indigenous Scholarship in Canada.” We forwarded the invitation for participation as an opportunity to engage in discussion on advancing diverse and critical Indigenous scholarship in the Social Sciences and Humanities, including addressing barriers to institutional support, Indigenous knowledge practices in the Academy, community-based research and Indigenous student experience. We also framed this as an opportunity to contribute to recommendations for the University of Victoria’s proposed *Indigenous Academic Strategic Plan* as well as respond to SSHRC’s *Imagining Canada’s Future Initiative* questions pertaining to Aboriginal Peoples (See Appendix A).

 Recognizing the importance of empowering Indigenous graduate students throughout the day’s proceedings the organizers felt it was important to invite a Keynote Speaker that would engage the participants in fundamental principles unique to Indigenous research. At the heart of most, if not all graduate research generally is methodology, the theoretical and epistemological foundation which grounds academic enquiry. What emerged throughout the day’s event was the realization that Indigenous graduate students bring experiential learning grounded in their cultural worldviews to the academy, prior to embarking upon graduate work. As such it was imperative that the Keynote contribute to the knowledge that the participants already bring to the academy. In this regard, Dr. Kathy Absolon (Wilfred Laurier University) was invited. Dr. Absolon’s scholarship on Indigenous methodology was timely and the organizers anticipated her presentation would garner considerable discussion during the round table. The organizers were also aware that Dr. Absolon’s presentation and presence would contribute to a safe cultural and learning environment whereby the conversation would privilege Indigenous thought and action.

 In addition to Dr. Absolon, the organizers also contacted Dr. Leroy Little Bear (University of Lethbridge) who unfortunately was unable to attend due to scheduling conflicts. However Dr. Little Bear provided several discussion prompts, which were included in the agenda. Wab Kinew (University of Winnipeg, Director Aboriginal Inclusion) initially agreed to serve as moderator though scheduling conflicts did not enable him to attend. Art Napoleon, 2015 MA graduate of the Indigenous Language Revitalization Program and local Indigenous media personality accepted the duties of moderator and inflected the proceedings with levity, which the organizers also felt would aid in the creation of a comfortable conversational space for students. The willingness of nationally and internationally renowned Indigenous academics to participate in the round table on very short notice speaks volumes about the University of Victoria’s reputation for exceptional scholarship and research opportunities. In particular, the recruitment and retention of cutting edge Indigenous faculty, which round table participants agreed has had a major impact on their graduate experience.

**The Event (See also Appendix B):**

 The morning session opened with a welcome and prayer by Elder May Sam following local protocol, followed by a round of introductions. Round table participants were pleased to welcome to the circle as observers Associate Dean Dr. Rosaline Canessa (Social Sciences), Associate Dean Dr. Claire Carlin (Graduate Studies) and Anne MacLaurin, Communications Officer Faculty of Social Sciences as well as several undergraduate students, University staff and interested community members. Dr. Canessa provided participants with some background on the roundtable initiative. Dr. Absolon then delivered an engaging and thought-provoking presentation on her personal journey in academia as a path-breaking Indigenous scholar or “searcher” in her words. She touched on the importance of our personal histories and self-location, recovery and reclamation of story and identity through trauma and self-doubt as part of our work as scholars, land-based knowledges and traditional methodologies and the importance of building and sustaining community within the institution. Her experience as former faculty also provided insights into changes in Indigenous presence and engagement at the University of Victoria.

 Eleven Indigenous PhD and Master’s students actively contributed to the day’s proceedings, with representation from the Faculties of Law, Environmental Studies, Political Science, Interdisciplinary Studies, Education, Indigenous Language Revitalization and Indigenous Governance. In the morning session the participants discussed their aspirations, challenges and successes as graduate students and scholars in general terms and was at moments very affecting and emotionally charged. Participants’ privacy at these points was acknowledged and assured. The afternoon session’s discussion focused on providing feedback specific to the SSHRC Future Challenge questions and recommendations specific to the University of Victoria. The event closed in a good way with a lively round dance by Art Napoleon. The entirety of the proceedings were filmed (with participants’ permission) by post-doctoral fellow at the Institute for Studies in Community and University Engagement (ISICUE), Dr. Sarah Wiebe.

**3) Discussion Questions and Summaries**

 As the organizers felt it was important to be flexible and responsive to the priorities and interests of the participants and to set the direction of the conversation as a group, much of the discussion was fluid, with overlapping themes and sometimes did not address each question in linear order. Below are summaries of the discussion with select reference to specific questions and quotations as pertinent.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. *Is graduate research in the Social Science and Humanities relevant to Indigenous communities/people and if so, in what way(s) or how?*
2. *Is the aim still to make space within or ‘Indigenize’ the Academy? What, if anything has changed in terms of this aim from preceding generations of path-finding and ground-breaking scholars?*
3. *Do you think Indigenous faculty/presence in the University is crucial to Indigenous grad student success? Why is it important more generally?*
4. *What are the biggest challenges facing current/prospective Indigenous graduate students within Academia now? Within communities? Examples: Funding, discriminatory practices, structural constraints of programs?*
5. *Was your current program and area of study your first choice and if yes/no can you explain why/why not?*
6. *In 2013 the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, which acts as the largest federal funding body for graduate student research adopted Six “Future Challenge Areas” for research in the coming years. The third is “How are the experiences and aspirations of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada essential to building a successful shared future?” within which are Six sub-question areas SSHRC has identified as research priorities.*
	1. *What are you first impressions of this initiative? For example, how these issue areas and desired research outcomes are framed? Might this framing constrain critical Indigenous scholarship?*
	2. *Do you agree these are priority research areas? Why/Why Not?*
7. *How can successful government and University research partnerships with Indigenous communities be built and sustained?*
8. *What resources have been important to you and what would you like to see available to Indigenous grad students? For example, funding, student services, campus community, cultural supports*
9. *What advice would you give to Indigenous students who are interested in obtaining an MA or PhD?*

**Summary of the Morning Session:**

 Discussion opened with reflections on our purpose in coming together as having an opportunity to impact policy and articulate what we want to see moving forward in terms of institutional support for our academic journeys. A number of participants began by describing the process of and impetus for, deciding on a graduate program to pursue. Motivation was articulated by several participants as arising from perceived community needs, such as experience of deficits in representation and voice in areas affecting the community including university research as well as the view that ideas around necessary accreditation and affirmation of Indigenous knowledges through Western education continues to be a pervasive and problematic influence. For example, participants discussed the lack of recognition for traditional educational accomplishments and honours.

 The discussion here turned to the theme of indigenization and prevailing racism embedded in the curriculum that Indigenous students are still made to grapple with. As one participant suggested, there is a problem of the tokenized inclusion or cursory “tacking on” of Indigenous trappings to the institution in terms of student services, ceremonial presence etc. without addressing racism and integration more substantively. For example, how Indigenous issues are being taught, represented or disregarded in general course content, material and the design of programs (that is, outside of separate Indigenous-specific programming):

*“Yes, we have to create Indigenous programming…but within that we have to recognize that there is [still] really racist and oppressive content that’s happening in this campus that needs to be taken up too.”*

The question of who is being asked to do this work of transformation and holding the university and non-Indigenous faculty and students to account for racism and misinformation in the classroom was raised by another participant, which proved to be a recurrent theme in the day’s conversation. On one hand is the sense that Indigenous grad students are looked upon to be the *“token voice who is jumping in and being the social justice perspective every time,”* also often acting as mentors for undergraduate students without access to or time to generate support systems responsive to their own needs and experiences (with many services tailored to undergrads). On the other is the acknowledgement that there is a heavy responsibility placed on Indigenous faculty and staff as instructors and administrators dealing with and attempting to “deconstruct” racist or colonial content, teaching methods and institutional processes and also serving as counsellors for Indigenous students (often outside their programs and purviews). These multiple concurrent roles are often overlooked and lead to burn out. Participants shared the view that Indigenous people are still inordinately being made to carry the burden for their own accommodation and institutional transformation generally. However it was acknowledged by one participant that their experience of UVic’s relative strengths in the intellectual atmosphere pertaining to Indigenous politics as a visitor influenced their decision to attend for their graduate work. They suggested that it was refreshing to *“learn in a space where there were lots of folks asking similar questions, that we don’t have to start several steps back…and we can start the discussion where it’s really meaningful”*

 A further theme that arose from the above observations on the stresses and challenges of carrying this burden imposed from the outside was the experience of what participants identified as *“lateral violence”* within Indigenous-specific programming among both students and faculty. Experiencing a lack of sensitivity to or respect for, diversity in terms of personal journeys around identity, histories, cultural connectivity or authenticity and location in some programs was one factor identified by participants as contributing to a sense of isolation and need for defensiveness. This produces relational dynamics that impede the ability of grad students to do the work they are there for. One participant indicated that such an experience influenced a change of programs and that a lack of institutional accountability results from frequently only having recourse to address student concerns on conduct within programs, often from those who are contributing to the dynamics in question and have positions of power from which they can impact the grades, career and reputation of grad students. The projection of trauma on others, identity politicization as well as the hierarchies and *“values of competition and ego”* in the academy, were discussed as potential contributing factors to shifting the few, hard-won spaces ostensibly meant to be safe, welcoming, mutually-supportive ones for Indigenous students into unhealthy, stressful spaces that replicate forms of stratification and marginalization they are meant to address. Speaking to this, there was agreement that room must be made for truth-sharing and meaningful conversation about the ongoing issues in Indigenous-specific programs and spaces in the University:

*“These things need to have light shone on them because they affect students…from all…areas differently…it’s important to know that there’s an accountability that also has to be taken from faculty whether they’re Indigenous or not.”*

There is a perception and concern however that because of the ongoing tenuousness of Indigenous-specific programming in universities, institutional pushback is possible if ongoing issues are exposed. There is a sense that a need for solidarity among Indigenous people in the Academy to retain and increase space sometimes mitigates internal critique and self-reflexivity.

**Summary of the Afternoon Session:**

The afternoon session opened with an overview of the Imagining Canada’s Future initiative and the Future Challenge Area questions pertaining to Aboriginal peoples. The organizers asked participants their first impressions of the framing of the initiative as an agenda and set of priorities for research with and by Indigenous peoples. One of the first questions that came up was how this may or may not affect the grant application process and uncertainty about the participation of Indigenous scholars in the vetting of applications dealing with projects pertaining to Indigenous issues and communities. Our Keynote Dr. Absolon was able to clarify some of this for the group, which was very helpful. Much of the initial discussion was directed to the sometimes prohibitive and “intimidating” application process for grants like the SSHRC fellowships generally but also the additional barriers and bureaucratic hurdles encountered by Indigenous researchers in the process of undertaking their projects, particularly involving community partners and the “transportability” of and dependence on funding. The limited flexibility in ethics, consent and validation processes when doing community-based research, to be responsive to the complexities around permission and representation in Indigenous communities was of particular note as a shared concern.

 Participants also reflected on implications of the language utilized in the Future Challenge questions. A concern was expressed that it did not quite escape the framing of Indigenous peoples as research subjects, making Indigenous people *“as researchers”* invisible, or problematic terminologies of preservation that evoke the aim of some work to “salvage” elements of Indigenous cultures (sub-question 4 on digital technologies and creative arts). As one participant put it, *“it’s like a deficit gets placed upon us before we can start being creative.”* Participants considered the possible rhetorical strategies or choices behind how the Challenge areas were framed and articulated, in terms of uncertainty on the intended audience to or for whom SSHRC is addressing these research priorities. Another sub-question’s wording that raised questions about the intent and audience of the initiative was number 6 regarding connecting the “young Aboriginal population” to “evolving knowledge and labour market needs.” It was suggested for example that there be greater clarity on such statements given the current context of dissent around the expansion of resource extraction industries and Indigenous communities’ *“values as land-based peoples.”* However one participant suggested that despite what they called an agreed-upon *“discourse problem”* in the framing of the Challenge Areas and questions, there is uncertainty as to how this reflects or affects SSHRC’s internal decision-making on funding allocations for particular projects, as opportunities to have very critical work funded that pushes back against what may be perceived as *“conventional ideologies”* seem to be available in their own experience. The discussion on SSHRC concluded with a breakout session in which participants formed small groups to provide draft recommendations in different areas regarding the grant application process, approaches to Indigenous research and funding priorities.

 Conversation finally turned to what resources have been important to participants at UVic as Indigenous graduate students. The Office of Indigenous Affairs and First People’s House providing a centre for community-building on campus, particularly cultural workshops and gatherings was suggested to help foster a sense of belonging and grounding amidst the stresses of student life. Services like the Emergency Tuition Fund provided through INAF was noted as important for accessibility. Faculty mentorship was also touted as a crucial aspect of participants’ experience and academic successes at UVic, as well as spaces of peer engagement like the Indigenous Studies Workshop organized and supported by Indigenous faculty.

**4) Draft Recommendations**

**a) University of Victoria**

* *Specific Supports for Indigenous Graduate Students to address a perceived emphasis on undergraduate programming*
	+ Counselling and peer-support, grant-writing workshops and other resources to help navigate finding scholarships and bursaries, thesis and project work support groups and more institutionally-supported spaces for collaborative learning like the Indigenous Studies Workshop and language tables
	+ Indigenous methodologies courses at the graduate level
	+ More career-development opportunities such as a forum for graduate publication in Indigenous studies
* *Greater supports for Indigenous faculty and efforts to recruit and retain them, acknowledging their often unseen or institutionally “off-record” “double-duties”*
	+ Community-building initiatives and activities for Indigenous students and faculty to create linkages and relationships across program divides to address over-burdening and isolation
	+ One idea offered is a paid peer-mentorship program hiring graduate students to ease the loads of faculty and be an additional funding source for students while providing a needed support service
	+ Organizing administrative, supervisory and teaching duties to better account for the additional responsibilities many Indigenous faculty take-on outside their official purviews, for example by delegating time to mentorship or creating dedicated mentorship positions (the former position in in Faculty of Law was mentioned). Participants suggest this should be accounted for among all faculty, not only Indigenous
* *University-wide cross-cultural awareness initiatives to address issues of accountability and responsiveness to racism and misinformation on Indigenous issues in the classroom*

**b) SSHRC**

* Application Process (Eligibility, Process, Structure, Requirements)
	+ *Eligibility Workshops*: Clear, accessible guidance on how to write SSHRC applications with awareness of strategic considerations for students such as post-graduate employment
	+ *Reconsider time-limitations of Doctoral Fellowship and Award eligibility***:** Consider the time commitment and flexibility required for responsible community-based work, possibly a specific fellowship or award for such work at the graduate level**.** Funds are often most necessary to ensure timely completion later on in the research process
	+ *Account for forms of community recognition as credentials***:** Make space to accommodate and give weight to diverse forms of community acknowledgement, such as traditional honors
	+ *A standing Indigenous Review Committee is essential and urgent*
	+ *Sensitivity to Language and Constraints created for some students by the need to use academic and social sciences jargon*
	+ *Sensitivity to Indigenous methodologies and protocol:* Consider adding space (page length) for self-introduction and self-location or include a biographical section
* **Research Priorities**
	+ *Research involving Indigenous People must involve Indigenous People (“Nothing about us without us”) as a principle*
	+ *Communities must have access to information on opportunities for funding research that will help them achieve their goals*
	+ *Transparency around and acknowledgment of diverse research relationships, intentions and motivations for researchers (who is involved, how and why)*
	+ *To consider self-determination as a principle in the validation of research goals and aims by Indigenous researchers and for Indigenous communities rather than deferral to externally defined goals and consideration of what stories are worthy to be gathered and what knowledge is useful to produce and reproduce*
	+ *Validate Indigenous research methods of knowledge gathering and dissemination and account for the restorative and healing mechanisms involved as these processes can be both traumatic and empowering*

**APPENDIX A: POSTER**

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**APPENDIX B: AGENDA**

**Indigenous Graduate Student Roundtable**

**Truth to Power: Indigenous Scholarship in Canada**

**Friday April 17th, 2015**

**AGENDA**

8:30 - 9:00am Registration and Morning Refreshments

9:00am Traditional Welcome and Acknowledgement of the Territories

 General Introduction of the Event and Purpose

 Introduction of the Keynote

9:30-10:30am Keynote address by Dr. Kathleen Absolon

 Questions

10:30-12:00pm Introduction of the Moderator, Art Napoleon

 Roundtable Participant Introductions

 Roundtable Discussion (Morning Session)

Discussion Questions/Prompts:

* *Is graduate research in the Social Science and Humanities relevant to Indigenous communities/people and if so, in what way(s) or how?*
* *Is the aim still to make space within or ‘Indigenize’ the Academy? What, if anything has changed in terms of this aim from preceding generations of path-finding and ground-breaking scholars?*
* *Do you think Indigenous faculty/presence in the University is crucial to Indigenous grad student success? Why is it important more generally?*
* *What are the biggest challenges facing current/prospective Indigenous graduate students within Academia now? Within communities?*

 *-Examples: Funding, discriminatory practices, structural constraints of programs?*

* *Was your current program and area of study your first choice and if yes/no can you explain why/why not?*

12:00pm-1:15pm LUNCH, networking, and informal discussion, video booth

1:15pm-3:00pm Roundtable Reconvenes (Afternoon Session)

 Short Summary of Themes from the Morning

Discussion Questions/Prompts:

* *In 2013 the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, which acts as the largest federal funding body for graduate student research adopted Six “Future Challenge Areas” for research in the coming years. The third is “How are the experiences and aspirations of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada essential to building a successful shared future?” within which are Six sub-question areas SSHRC has identified as research priorities (READ).*
	+ *What are you first impressions of this initiative? For example, how these issue areas and desired research outcomes are framed? Might this framing constrain critical Indigenous scholarship?*
	+ *Do you agree these are priority research areas? Why/Why Not?*

[SEE Attached APPENDIX A & B for reference]

* *How can successful government and University research partnerships with Indigenous communities be built and sustained?*
* *What resources have been important to you and what would you like to see available to Indigenous grad students?*

 *-Funding, student services, campus community, cultural supports*

* *What advice would you give to Indigenous students who are interested in obtaining an MA or PhD?*

3:00pm-3:30pm Wrap-up and Closing Remarks

**APPENDICES: Excerpts From SSHRC’s Website**

**AGENDA APPENDIX A**

**SSHRC FUTURE CHALLENGE AREAS**

**Goal**

 Through its [Imagining Canada’s Future initiative](http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/society-societe/community-communite/Imagining_Canadas_Future-Imaginer_l_avenir_du_Canada-eng.aspx), and with a focus on [six future challenge areas](http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/programs-programmes/challenge_areas-domaines_des_defis/index-eng.aspx#a6), SSHRC seeks to advance the contributions of the social sciences and humanities towards meeting Canada’s future, long-term societal challenges and opportunities.

**Context**

 Research on people, both past and present, provides a strong foundation for Canada to be able to adapt and succeed in the future. In keeping with its mandate and tradition SSHRC promotes and supports the very best talent and ideas in the social sciences and humanities, to help build a better future for Canada and the world.

 Canada’s success in the 21st century will depend on research preparedness. We need to think ahead, and collectively imagine all possible futures, so that we can anticipate and be prepared to address emerging societal and knowledge needs, and to guide the best choices going forward.

 This is the inspiration for SSHRC’s [Imagining Canada’s Future initiative](http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/society-societe/community-communite/Imagining_Canadas_Future-Imaginer_l_avenir_du_Canada-eng.aspx), launched in June 2011. The initiative set out to identify future challenge areas for Canada in an evolving global context that are likely to emerge over the next five, 10 and 20 years. These are issues to which the social sciences and humanities research community could contribute its knowledge, talent and expertise.

 Following a comprehensive, two-year, national and international consultation, the following cross-cutting components emerged as being essential for Canada and Canadians in an evolving global context: sustainable, resilient communities; creativity, innovation and prosperity; values, cultures, inclusion and diversity; and governance and institutions.

 In June 2013, SSHRC’s governing council endorsed six future challenge areas. Each challenge area includes a range of possible—yet not exclusive—issues and subquestions that may also be addressed.

1. [What new ways of learning, particularly in higher education, will Canadians need to thrive in an evolving society and labour market?](http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/society-societe/community-communite/Future_Challenge_Areas-domaines_des_defis_de_demain-eng.aspx#1)
2. [What effects will the quest for energy and natural resources have on our society and our position on the world stage?](http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/society-societe/community-communite/Future_Challenge_Areas-domaines_des_defis_de_demain-eng.aspx#2)
3. [How are the experiences and aspirations of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada essential to building a successful shared future?](http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/society-societe/community-communite/Future_Challenge_Areas-domaines_des_defis_de_demain-eng.aspx#3)
4. [What might the implications of global peak population be for Canada?](http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/society-societe/community-communite/Future_Challenge_Areas-domaines_des_defis_de_demain-eng.aspx#4)
5. [How can emerging technologies be leveraged to benefit Canadians?](http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/society-societe/community-communite/Future_Challenge_Areas-domaines_des_defis_de_demain-eng.aspx#5)
6. [What knowledge will Canada need to thrive in an interconnected, evolving global landscape?](http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/society-societe/community-communite/Future_Challenge_Areas-domaines_des_defis_de_demain-eng.aspx#6)

**Objectives**

 The six challenge areas have been integrated within SSHRC’s [Talent](http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/umbrella_programs-programme_cadre/talent-eng.aspx), [Insight](http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/umbrella_programs-programme_cadre/insight-savoir-eng.aspx) and [Connection](http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/umbrella_programs-programme_cadre/connection-connexion-eng.aspx) programs, to encourage and promote research, talent development, and the mobilization of knowledge in focussed challenge areas, complementing SSHRC’s support of these activities across all research areas.

**Funding Opportunities**

 In keeping with its tradition and mandate, SSHRC will continue to invest in humanities and social sciences research addressing a broad range of topics, while also promoting and investing in the future challenge areas.

SSHRC funds research carried out by individual scholars, teams of researchers and, in some cases, institutions, through its [Insight](http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/umbrella_programs-programme_cadre/insight-savoir-eng.aspx) and [Connection](http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/umbrella_programs-programme_cadre/connection-connexion-eng.aspx) programs. SSHRC’s [Talent](http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/umbrella_programs-programme_cadre/talent-eng.aspx) program supports students and postdoctoral fellows in acquiring research and professional skills.

 SSHRC invites all applicants to its funding opportunities to review the six [future challenge areas and subquestions](http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/society-societe/community-communite/Future_Challenge_Areas-domaines_des_defis_de_demain-eng.aspx), and to consider addressing one or more of these areas in their research proposal. However, this will not be an evaluation criterion for merit review.

 Funding decisions by SSHRC are based on the recommendations of the merit review committees and on available funds. No dedicated funding is allocated for the future challenge areas.

 SSHRC will continue to monitor research capacity in these areas, and is developing and implementing strategies, including a range of outreach and knowledge mobilization activities, to enhance the contribution of social sciences and humanities across the six challenge areas. Researchers are invited to apply to the current [Knowledge Synthesis Grants funding opportunity](http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/programs-programmes/ksg_learning-ssc_apprentissage-eng.aspx) to contribute social sciences and humanities insights focusing on the first future challenge area question: What new ways of learning, particularly in higher education, will Canadians need to thrive in an evolving society and labour market?

[file://localhost/<http/::www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca:funding-financement:programs-programmes:challenge\_areas-domaines\_des\_defis:index-eng.aspx>](file:///C%3A%5C%3Chttp%5C%3A%3Awww.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca%3Afunding-financement%3Aprograms-programmes%3Achallenge_areas-domaines_des_defis%3Aindex-eng.aspx%3E)

**AGENDA APPENDIX B**

**SSHRC FUTURE CHALLENGE AREA 3**

**How are the experiences and aspirations of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada essential to building a successful shared future?**

 SSHRC has made various, proactive investments in Aboriginal research over the years, stressing an approach by, for and with First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples.

 This knowledge can be more effectively mobilized to help Canadians understand the current historical, cultural, social and economic situation in which we find ourselves, and to inform the creation of a vibrant, shared future.

Sub-questions:

1. What are the implications of historical and modern treaties?
2. What barriers exist to increased consciousness about traditional and contemporary Indigenous values, cultures, leadership, and knowledge systems?
3. How can we build enhanced capacity by, with and for Aboriginal communities to engage in and benefit from research?
4. What role could digital technologies and creative arts play in teaching and preserving diverse First Nations, Métis and Inuit heritage, memory and identity?
5. How might the richness of endangered languages and cultures of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples contribute to global human heritage?
6. What is needed to bridge the growing young Aboriginal population’s aspirations and potential to evolving knowledge and labour market needs?

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