

REPORT

2024 UBC Faculty of Arts Strategic Plan: Musqueam Engagement

This report details the findings of a May 2, 2024 engagement session with Musqueam Indian Band. The engagement session's (the session) goal was to solicit Musqueam's input into UBC's Faculty of Arts 2024 Strategic Plan (the Strategic Plan). The session was attended by members of various departments in Musqueam administration as well as former and current UBC students who are also Musqueam community members. The group spoke openly about their individual and collective challenges and hopes as members or staff of a First Nation who have a longstanding relationship with UBC. They provided concrete examples and ideas that can and should be implemented over the next five years in order to ensure the Faculty of Arts continues to serve Musqueam, the First Nation whose unceded land UBC's primary campus sits on.

This report includes a brief history of the relationship between the Faculty of Arts and Musqueam, a list of session attendees and affiliations, a summary of findings as well as recommendations.

Thank you to Musqueam for hosting, to UBC Faculty of Arts for funding and organizing the meeting, and to all attendees for the productive day of open and supportive discussion.

UBC Faculty of Arts and Musqueam Background and History

"There's a history here of UBC not even knowing we were here. So a former Chief and myself went to UBC a number of years ago and the Chief said, 'this is OUR university' and the President of the day nearly fell off his chair...the history of the lack of acknowledgement of Musqueam goes back a long way. So as a result of that encounter we kind of recoiled and thought, 'well I guess they're not ready for us yet'. So the next President came along and the same Chief and I said the same thing and that President said, 'well what can we do about that? Tell me, tell me what the problem is,' and I said, 'there is such a huge social, cultural, educational gap between the two communities. They never touch, they never meet and we do not get the benefit of anything from UBC. Except disdain or being left out totally.'" May 2, 2024 Musqueam engagement session participant Leona Sparrow reflecting on the history of Musqueam-UBC relations.

Despite a rocky beginning as Leona reflects on above, the UBC Faculty of Arts has a longstanding and close relationship with Musqueam. This connection is built heavily on interpersonal relationships held by individual Musqueam and UBC researchers and academics in various departments. Musqueam's direct engagement on the Faculty of Arts Strategic Plan speaks highly to the recognized importance of this relationship – a review of existing UBC faculty strategic plans available online indicates no other faculty

has engaged Musqueam directly for similar input. A number of departments and programs within the Faculty of Arts are leaders in forming and maintaining a reciprocal relationship with Musqueam. Notable among these are the First Nations and Endangered Languages Program, the Museum of Anthropology, and Department of Anthropology (and associated Laboratory of Archaeology).

The **First Nations and Endangered Languages** (FNEL) program's formal relationship with Musqueam dates back to 1997, when a partnership was struck between the two groups with the explicit purpose of promoting "development and use of hən̓q̓əmiñəm through collaborative research initiatives" ([FNEL website](#)). Since then, the partnership has seen an impressive production of children's books, online learning materials, formal research papers, and perhaps most importantly accredited hən̓q̓əmiñəm language courses. These hən̓q̓əmiñəm language courses are delivered at Musqueam, are open to Musqueam community members and are taught or co-taught or taught by Musqueam community members. They have a significant impact on Musqueam's continued work to revitalize hən̓q̓əmiñəm, which currently has no fluent speakers. This partnership's success is owed in no small part to s̓əyətəq (Larry Grant), Grace Point, Marnie Point, Jill Campbell, Pat Shaw, Vanessa Campbell and others at UBC and Musqueam.

Similar to FNEL, UBC's **Museum of Anthropology** (MOA) has a longstanding close relationship with Musqueam. This relationship is built on decades of interactions between the two groups as MOA is the formal repository for many Musqueam belongings and ancestors. This relationship was formalized in 2006 with the signing of the [UBC MOA and Musqueam Memorandum of Affiliation](#), a document which clearly outlines the expectations and requirements for a reciprocally beneficial relationship between the two groups. Under the direction of this document, MOA and Musqueam produced a number of award-winning exhibitions, struck a development committee still in operation to guide MOA-Musqueam work, produced a teaching kit available [online](#) and used widely in lower mainland classrooms, developed the [Reciprocal Research Network](#), [Musqueam 101](#), and often employ Musqueam youth who are or may be UBC students to work in the Museum. Similar to FNEL, this partnership's success is due in no small part to the tireless work of many individuals including Leona Sparrow, s̓əyətəq, Jason Woolman, Sue Rowley, Andrew Martindale, members of the Musqueam-UBC Development Committee, Musqueam leadership – past and present, and others.

UBC's **Department of Anthropology and associated Laboratory of Archaeology** has a relationship with Musqueam dating to the 1940's, largely the result of UBC faculty Dr. Charles Borden's close working relationship with Musqueam. Dr. Borden spent his career working in archaeology and excavated many of Musqueam's major village sites in partnership with Andrew C. Charles, a Musqueam community member and community archaeologist. The UBC Anthropology-LOA-Musqueam relationship resulted in collaborative archaeological excavations, museum exhibitions, successful infrastructure/research grants (including one of [UBC's first Indigenous Strategic Initiative Grants](#) to support continued reciprocal training and knowledge sharing), archaeological field/lab schools, and many other initiatives that are the direct response of Musqueam community and leadership requests.

Notably, in 2021 [LOA and Musqueam partnered to develop a ground penetrating radar \(GPR\) course for First Nations communities](#) conducting or participating in Indian Residential School searches. The course was offered again in 2022 and has provided capacity-building training and guidance to over 40 participants from 16 different communities. The course also helped Musqueam's Archaeology Department develop their own GPR-service providing team who currently take on for-profit GPR service

contracts for various clients and are assisting other communities conducting Indian Residential School studies. This partnership's success can be attributed to the efforts of Patricia Ormerod, Camilla Speller, Leona Sparrow, Richard Campbell, Charles Borden, Andrew C. Charles, Chief Delbert Guerin, Andrew Martindale, Kody Huard, Aviva Rathbone, Chief Wayne Sparrow and Musqueam Council, Wayne Point, Terry Point, and many more.

There are other examples of successful reciprocal relationships between programs and/or departments and Musqueam (see UBC's First Nations House of Learning Musqueam Elder in Residence program and Musqueam [Bridge Through Sport](#) for example). The above list is provided as an illustrative example and is, by no means exhaustive. It does demonstrate, however, that the Faculty of Arts has a strong history of working with Musqueam in a way that serves both parties. This history should be built upon and expanded as UBC Faculty of Arts moves forward.

May 2024 Musqueam Engagement Session Attendees

The May 2024 Musqueam engagement session was held in-person at the Musqueam Indian Band Administration building on May 2, 2024. A list of in-person attendees and affiliations is as follows:

Name	Affiliation
Aeli Black	Musqueam Archaeology Permit Officer and former UBC student
Erica Joseph	Musqueam Title and Rights Department Executive Assistant
River Speck	Musqueam community member and current UBC student
Leona Sparrow	Musqueam community member and Musqueam-UBC Liaison and former UBC student
Jordan Wilson	Musqueam community member and former UBC student
Larry Grant	Musqueam community member and acting Musqueam Language and Culture Department Manager
Ed John	Musqueam Chief Administrative Officer and former UBC student
Kevin Wilson	Musqueam community member, Title and Rights Department GIS Technician and former UBC student
Elizabeth McManus	Musqueam Senior Archivist and former UBC student
Christiane Hoppman	UBC Professor of Psychology and Associate Dean Research and Graduate Studies in the Faculty of Arts
Clare Crowston	Dean of the UBC Faculty of Arts
Aviva Rathbone	Rathbone Consulting

Engagement Session Results

The May 2024 engagement session focused on hearing from Musqueam staff and community members directly on their experience with UBC, specifically the Faculty of Arts if applicable, and their hopes for the future of Musqueam and UBC's relationship over the next 5 years. The following themes were identified:

1. Decolonizing "expertise"
2. Moving beyond land acknowledgements
3. Building on already established relationships and programs

4. Making Faculty of Arts programs accessible and attractive to Musqueam community students and faculty
5. Compensation and funding
6. No checked boxes

These themes are discussed further below and recommendations provided.

Theme 1: Decolonizing “expertise”

Participants in the engagement session made note of a need communicated to various departments and leaders at UBC over the years. This is the need for UBC to develop and institute means of formally recognizing (1) the experience and knowledge Musqueam community members hold and (2) academics and researchers who work outside the university’s typical model in order to meet the needs of the community. Both of these needs speak to the broader need and means to decolonize UBC – a post-secondary institution operating within a colonial framework and using colonial criteria to define success and expertise.

In the case of (1), many community members are experts in their own right and by Musqueam’s own criteria are considered to hold a “Musqueam PhD”, however their experience and expertise is currently not formally recognized by UBC. As an example, Richard Campbell, Musqueam’s Senior Archaeological Research Technician, has over 20 years of archaeological expertise and a lifetime of cultural knowledge. He is considered one of the most knowledgeable field archaeologists in the Lower Mainland and is regularly requested by name to work on complex and/or sensitive projects. Richard has been listed as a co-instructor for Musqueam and UBC’s GPR course, but his archaeological expertise has otherwise never been formally recognized by UBC through accreditation or otherwise.

A number of session participants also noted that (2) academics and researchers working collaboratively with Musqueam should be excused from publishing and teaching requirements in order to achieve tenure or other grants/awards. Instead, these faculty members’ work should be evaluated based on other, alternative success measures.

To address this need, the following recommendations are provided:

1. UBC Faculty of Arts explore means of formally recognizing Musqueam knowledge and expertise. This could be through accreditation for Musqueam experts employed in their field of expertise or through other means as determined through consultation with Musqueam.
2. UBC Faculty of Arts explore means of evaluating faculty and researchers beyond the typical criteria of works published or courses taught in order to allow for other success indicators for those working collaboratively with Musqueam. These evaluation criteria should be determined in collaboration with Musqueam.

Theme 2: Moving beyond land acknowledgements

A discussion on the use of land acknowledgements identified the possible harm these statements cause when they are not used in an appropriate, well-intentioned, and informed way. A number of session participants noted that when not given the appropriate care, space, and weight, land acknowledgements

are harmful rather than helpful. In particular, classes where land acknowledgements are presented without context or further discussion made students feel uncomfortable. In these cases participants noted the land acknowledgements were simply a matter of process and not presented to truly acknowledge the unceded lands UBC resides on and what that means historically and in the context of UBC's ongoing work and for UBC students.

One participant provided examples of classes where professors did a good job of moving beyond a performative land acknowledgement by expanding the land acknowledgement into a week-long module focused on unpacking land acknowledgements - the meaning behind them, how they relate to overall course content, and how to move beyond them in a meaningful way. The professors noted are Camilla Speller (UBC Anthropology) and Andrew Martindale (UBC Anthropology). Sue Rowley and Elizabeth Johnson of UBC's Museum of Anthropology are also noted as working to move beyond land acknowledgements and in to meaningful action.

Session participants noted that while land acknowledgements are important in foregrounding the Indigenous peoples who were and are still present, it is time for staff and faculty to move beyond performative and scripted statements and in to actions.

To address this need, the following recommendations are provided:

1. UBC Faculty of Arts staff and faculty participate in facilitated one-day workshops to better understand the history, meaning, and power of land acknowledgements and to conceptualize how these themes might be integrated into their course content; and,
2. Faculty be required to amend course content to bring an aspect of land acknowledgment in to their specific course content.

Theme 3: Building on existing relationships and programs

As noted in the background and history section of this report, there are a number of UBC Faculty of Arts programs, departments, and faculty who have a history of truly collaborative work with Musqueam. These existing relationships should be attended to and highlighted in order for other UBC Faculty of Arts departments and programs to benefit from their successes and lessons learned. In short, UBC Faculty of Arts has a strong history of working collaboratively with Musqueam and should take full advantage of that history in making sure it informs future endeavours.

To address this need, the following recommendations are provided:

1. Host “lunch and learn” or other similar sharing opportunities for Faculty of Arts staff to feature presentations from faculty, staff, and researchers with existing successful collaborative relationships with Musqueam. These sessions should be open to faculty and staff only with the explicit intent of:
 - a) Providing Faculty of Arts staff and faculty with examples of appropriate ways to form a reciprocal relationship with Musqueam.
 - b) Acknowledging the individuals, programs, and departments who have formed successful, reciprocal, and lasting relationships with Musqueam.
 - c) Connecting faculty and staff wishing to form a collaborative relationship with Musqueam with UBC faculty or staff who can provide mentorship and guidance

Theme 4: Making UBC Faculty of Arts programs accessible and attractive

Most of UBC’s degree programs are built primarily on class-based learning. While many tend to think of this teaching model as synonymous with education, this is not the case in many cultures. This includes Musqueam who, along with many Indigenous peoples, practice land-based learning. This model of teaching and learning has been in existence for much longer than classroom-based learning and Musqueam has been learning this way for thousands of years. Land-based learning has been formally recognized by a number of Canadian secondary and post-secondary institutions who offer educational programs in line with Indigenous teaching pedagogy. For examples, see the [University of Saskatchewan’s Masters in Land-Based Education](#), Regina Public Schools and First Nations University of Canada’s [Miskasowin askihk](#), and [University of Manitoba’s Land-Based Learning Program](#).

UBC’s Institute for Critical Indigenous Studies (a Faculty of Arts Program) offers students the opportunity to participate in land-based learning through their [Indigenous Land-Based course studies](#). There is little information about this opportunity online though the program page though the page does note courses meet graduation requirements but do not lead toward a Minor or Major. This program is relatively unknown to Musqueam community members and is not well advertised.

There are substantial opportunities for UBC to integrate land-based learning into course offerings in a meaningful way including expanding the already-existing UBC program noted above. Additional opportunities include integration of existing land-based learning certifications into program delivery. One example is [BC’s Resource Inventory Standards Committee Archaeological and Culturally Modified Tree \(CMT\) Inventory Training for Crew Members](#) (RISC). This program features a 5-day course designed to be taught through classroom and outdoor training and graduates receive a certificate from the Province of BC. This certification makes graduates attractive to prospective employers and can easily incorporate Indigenous land-based learning methods and goals.

In addition, many community members are already participating in land-based learning by fishing, gathering, hunting or harvesting with their families or by employment in careers such as archaeology or

environmental monitoring. There is significant opportunity for UBC to formally support these existing land-based learning programs.

As well, participants in the engagement session noted the importance in hosting programs at Musqueam for non-Indigenous faculty and students to become more familiar with the community. Land-based learning programs open to non-Indigenous participants would provide this opportunity and would help facilitate strengthened connections between Musqueam and UBC communities. In the past, UBC's Department of Anthropology Archaeological Field school hosted at Musqueam provided such an opportunity and many students remarked on the importance of being able to make personal connections with Musqueam community members. This is important to Musqueam in cultivating an understanding and respect for the people who have been the steward of this land since time immemorial.

To address this need, the following recommendations are provided:

1. UBC Faculty of Arts explore existing opportunities (such as aforementioned RISC and UBC Indigenous Critical Studies Land-based learning program as well as UBC Department of Anthropology Archaeological field schools) to integrate land-based learning into course offerings. These explorations should be done in collaboration with Musqueam.
2. UBC Faculty of Arts explore ways to offer accreditation to Musqueam community members and others already engaged in land-based learning in their formal and informal roles in the community. This could be done by offering self directed study courses, work-learn placements, or other means as decided in collaboration with Musqueam.
3. All Faculty of Arts faculty and staff participate in a tour of and orientation to Musqueam.

Theme 5: Funding and Compensation

All of the recommendations for further work provided in this report must be explored in collaboration with Musqueam. Engagement session participants noted that Musqueam's time and efforts must be fairly compensated in order to ensure Musqueam's sustained engagement and to respect Musqueam's needs.

To address this need, the following recommendations are provided:

1. UBC Faculty of Arts explore providing Musqueam with ongoing, committed, and sustained and budgeted engagement funding to support their collaboration on the Faculty of Arts Strategic Plan over the next 5 years.
2. This funding and support should be integrated into Faculty of Arts budgets and should not rely on external funders, grants, or other means.

Theme 6: No Checked Boxes

Participants in the engagement session spoke several times on the importance of ensuring Musqueam's participation in any research, projects, or initiatives is not simply a "checked box". Session participants noted current and historical struggles with faculty and students who engage Musqueam too little and too late, who approach Musqueam with designed research projects or goals in mind and who can not or do not respect Musqueam's timelines and capacity constraints. Several of the participants noted that some of these projects may be of interest to Musqueam but because of the way Musqueam is engaged they are not able to participate. As well, participants made clear that Musqueam's needs change over time and so meaningful engagement must occur over the lifespan of a project, this includes the proposed Strategic Plan. Participants stated clear concerns regarding the ability for the Strategic Plan's findings to be actioned in a meaningful way. They noted there is a history of engaging on UBC initiatives without seeing actual change enacted.

Despite this, there are a number of programs, research projects, and initiatives which engage Musqueam in a meaningful way and these initiatives and the faculty and researchers responsible are valuable assets and may be able to help guide others.

To address this need, the following recommendations are provided:

1. In collaboration with Musqueam, UBC explore producing a "guide to respectful collaboration with Musqueam", clearly outlining responsibilities, respectful approaches, timeline and funding considerations among other things.
2. Faculty of Arts departmental heads meet with Musqueam administration a minimum of 1/year to discuss relationship successes and identify areas for improvement and possible research or project collaboration opportunities.
3. Faculty of Arts 2024 Strategic Plan team meet with Musqueam administration regularly during plan implementation and monitoring to collect feedback and amend plan goals and actions to meet Musqueam's changing needs, if necessary.
4. All faculty and staff should read and be familiar with:
 - a. [Musqueam's website](#)
 - b. Susan Roy's book "These Mysterious Peoples" (2010)
 - c. Musqueam's [Comprehensive Community Plan](#)
 - d. [Musqueam Teaching Kit](#)

Conclusion

The recommendations provided in this report are the result of an engagement session with Musqueam administration staff and several past and present Musqueam UBC students. An engagement session was **not** held for the wider community or Musqueam leadership and so their specific needs are not reflected in this document and may differ from what's presented here.

As this is the first time any UBC Faculty has engaged Musqueam directly for input into a strategic plan, it is a notable step toward a future where Musqueam's needs are attended to in real and meaningful ways. UBC's Faculty of Arts commitment to meaningful engagement and prioritization of Musqueam's needs will hopefully serve as an example for others.

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