

## **UNBC Faculty and Staff Deeply Saddened by the Government's Actions towards the Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs**

We, the following faculty and staff at the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC), are extremely disheartened that the Government of British Columbia has once again chosen to trample on Indigenous Rights in support of the interests of a private corporation. The Government of British Columbia and the Government of Canada have wasted decades to address the legitimate concerns and rights of the Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs. The Chiefs have now chosen to evict Coastal Gas Link and their employees from their territories in order to protect the lands they are responsible for. Rather than negotiate in good faith, the government used public resources to bring in RCMP tactical units to arrest and physically remove Wet'suwet'en land defenders and their supporters.

The Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs have never ceded their jurisdiction to the lands they have governed for thousands of years. The Supreme Court of Canada, in *Delgamuukw & Gisday wa* (1997), upheld the fact that Aboriginal Rights to traditionally occupied, unceded lands in British Columbia have not been extinguished and that provincial laws cannot extinguish Aboriginal Rights. Our university has a long history of recognizing and honoring Indigenous leaders who have fought for the land rights of their people. The late Dr. Alfred Joseph held the name Gisday wa and spent a great deal of his life fighting for the land rights of the Wet'suwet'en people. Dr. Roger William led the Tsilhqot'in land title case that was decided in the Tsilhqot'in's favour by a unanimous decision in the Supreme Court of Canada. Our former Chancellor, the late Dr. Joseph Gosnell was a key figure in the Nisga'a fight for self-government of their lands.

By expressing our solidarity with the Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs, we by no means wish to disrespect the members of Band Councils, or others who support this project. We realize this is a complex issue that has created division within the Wet'suwet'en Nation as a whole. We believe the source of these tensions stem from the fact, that in the case of the Wet'suwet'en, the provincial and federal governments, along with Coastal Gas Link, consciously chose to ignore the rights and responsibilities of the Hereditary Chiefs.

Our provincial and federal governments talk about reconciliation and both have passed bills saying they recognize the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Their actions, to date, clearly reveal that they continue to support corporate interests over the rights of Indigenous Peoples. We ask our elected leaders to truthfully support honorable and respectful negotiations with the Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs in regards to their rights and title to the lands they have been responsible for since time immemorial.

We are speaking as individual faculty and staff and not for the university as a whole.

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| 1. Dr. Ross Hoffman           | First Nations Studies                     |
| 2. Dr. Paul Bowles            | Economics and Global Studies              |
| 3. Dr. Zoe Meletis            | Geography, Earth & Environmental Sciences |
| 4. Lauren Phillips            | Outdoor Recreation and Tourism            |
| 5. Dr. Dana Wessell Lightfoot | Department of History                     |
| 6. Dr. Diana Kutzner          | Health Sciences                           |
| 7. Dr. Erin Baerwald          | Ecosystem Science and Management          |
| 8. Dr. Gretchen Vogelsang     | School of Education                       |
| 9. Lindsay Dainie Hastey      | Communications and Marketing              |
| 10. Sheila Iwanciwski         | School of Education                       |
| 11. Beth Beeson               | Network & Telecom                         |
| 12. Kevin Hutchings           | Department of English                     |
| 13. Dr. Julia Wimmers-Klick   | Northern Medical Program                  |
| 14. Teal Randle               | Faculty of the Environment                |
| 15. Dr. Catherine Nolin       | Geography, Earth & Environmental Sciences |
| 16. Susie Wilson              | Data Services Librarian                   |
| 17. Erica Hernández-Read      | Northern BC Archives                      |
| 18. Dr. Henry Harder          | Vice-Provost of Indigenous Initiatives    |
| 19. Dr. Susan Burke           | School of Social Work                     |
| 20. Dr. Steve Helle           | School of Engineering                     |
| 21. Jenni Bomford             | English Department                        |
| 22. Dr. Carla Glen            | English Department                        |

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| 23. Dr. Guido Wimmers          | School of Engineering                     |
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| 25. Angela Kehler              | Student Recruitment                       |
| 26. Katie Cornish              | Health Research Institute                 |
| 27. Alex Lane                  | Health Research Institute                 |
| 28. Dr. Jacqueline Holler      | Department of English                     |
| 29. Prof. Dawn Hemingway       | School of Social Work                     |
| 30. Caroline Sewell            | Client Services Analyst                   |
| 31. Dr. Paul Sanborn           | Ecosystem Science and Management          |
| 32. Dr. Marieka Sax            | Department of Anthropology                |
| 33. Dr. Daniel Sims            | First Nations Studies                     |
| 34. Dr. Robert Budde           | Department of English                     |
| 35. Dale Laluk                 | Audio Visual Technologist                 |
| 36. Dr. Sinead Earley          | Environmental & Sustainability Studies    |
| 37. Dr. Heather Peters         | School of Social Work                     |
| 38. Dr. Sean Maurice           | Northern Medical Program                  |
| 39. Amy Beyer                  | Graduate Enrolment & Scholarships Advisor |
| 40. Dr. Troy Bordun            | Department of English                     |
| 41. Dr. Tara L. Joly           | Anthropology Department                   |
| 42. Cher Mazo                  | First Nations Centre                      |
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| 44. Dr. Roger Wheate           | Geography, Earth & Environmental Sciences |
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| 46. Shannon MacKay             | Student Advisor                           |
| 47. Dr. Si Transken            | School of Social Work                     |
| 48. Dr. Annie Booth            | Environmental & Sustainability Studies    |
| 49. Dr. Paul D. Siakaluk       | Department of Psychology                  |
| 50. Dr. Joseph Shea            | Geography, Earth & Environmental Sciences |
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| 53. Dr. Alexander Lautensach   | School of Education                       |
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72. Dr. Fiona MacPhail
73. Katriona S. Auerbach
74. The Collective for Anti-Racism
75. Lisa Striegler
76. Dr. Loraine Lavallee
77. Laura Pyke

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