

*The Indigenous
Intern
Leadership
Program (IILP)
as a WIL Model*

ACE-WIL CACEE JOINT CONFERENCE
PRESENTATION

MAY 26, 2026

TRU

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Land Acknowledgement

We are honoured to be meeting with you today on the traditional territories of the ancestral, unceded territory of the Secwépemc Nation, specifically situated on the lands of the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc.

We are grateful to be here on this beautiful land sharing and learning with you.





Overview

1. Welcome & Intros
2. What is the IILP program? Why is it important
3. How does the IILP work? For students and employers
4. Where to find out more? Who to contact for program details
5. What is the IILP project OC? Promotion of IILP program within WIL opportunities
6. Questions



Indigenous Intern Leadership Program (IILP): Background

September 2016: British Columbia Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN) and Business Council of BC (BCBC) Memorandum of Understanding:

To work together to eliminate societal gaps and to advance reconciliation through sustainable economic development

2016/17: Champions Table was created with 11 First Nations leaders and 11 private sector leaders. Indigenous Intern Leadership Program was early joint initiative.



IILP Partnerships

Vancouver Island University (VIU)

- IILP project sponsor: Administers the program and acts as primary point of contact for both internship applicants and employers
- Partners with BCAFN, BCBC and officials at 25 BC post-secondary institutions (PSIs) to promote IILP

Okanagan College (OC)

- Holds regular IILP info sessions with employers, universities, colleges, and Indigenous communities and organizations
- Promotes the IILP throughout the Okanagan Shuswap Similkameen areas
- Hosts IILP Intern Network Sharing sessions for interns and program alumni



IILP was launched in January 2019 with over 200 interns who have completed or are in the program to date.

Indigenous Intern Leadership Program: Why it Matters

Indigenous Students:
Access, Completion, Transition



IILP supports Indigenous students to successfully transition to meaningful employment after completing their post-secondary studies in any field

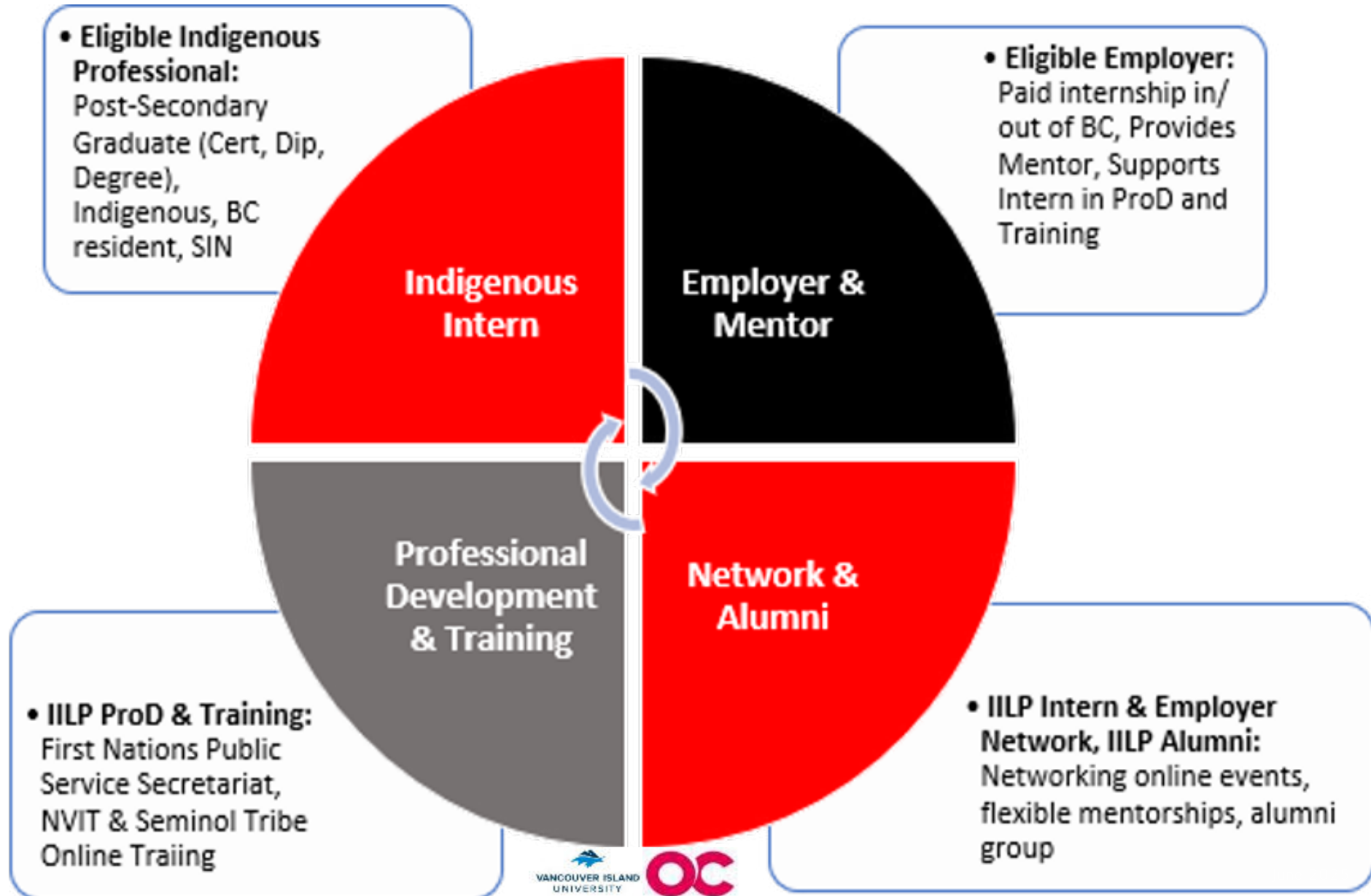
Indigenous Intern Leadership Program: Why it Matters

What are the benefits of this program to
Indigenous professionals?

IILP participants (interns and employers) benefit from self-selected **Professional Development & Training, Networking, and the IILP Alumni Association**

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Indigenous Intern Leadership Program (IILP): 4 Components



How does the Indigenous Intern Leadership Program (IILP) work?



- Qualifying Indigenous post-secondary graduates
- 2-year intern positions in prominent BC companies at the employers' expense
- = A rich experience that builds personal experience, networks and knowledge for both the intern and other firm employees and leaders

How does the Indigenous Intern Leadership Program (IILP) work?



Provides upcoming and recent graduates with workplace skills and training



Builds a strong foundation towards a lasting career



Creates opportunities to support Indigenous professionals as future community leaders in business and BC's economy



Identifies and fills the skill-gaps common to many First Nations communities and builds long term career employment



IILP Intern Qualifications



To be eligible to apply to become an IILP intern, applicants are:

1. A graduate or graduating from a trades / technical/ vocational/ academic program including certificate, diploma, degree or higher level of education programs from a recognized post-secondary institution
3. Self-identify as Indigenous
4. A BC resident or BC post-secondary graduate
5. Hold a valid Social Insurance Number
6. Preference will be given to applicants who are 35 years or younger

Indigenous Intern Leadership Program: Benefits



Professional Development & Training – In partnership with the **First Nations Public Service Secretariat, Nicola Valley Institute of Technology, and the Seminole Tribe Native Learning Centre**. interns and employers are provided with access to flexible professional development and training.



Mentorship and Leadership Development – Interns in the IILP have asked that the program place equal emphasis on helping to find a job, identifying a mentor, and helping with leadership development.



Identifying Talent – Help us identify Indigenous professionals who can benefit from the meaningful work provided by the IILP.



Addressing the Gap - Please join us in trying to address the gap in opportunities for indigenous communities and professionals.

Sustainability of the IILP

Phase I 2019-2023: The Government of British Columbia provided financial support for phase I of the IILP - January 2019 to April 2022 and have committed support for year 1 of phase II – April 2022 to April 2023.

Sustainability Plan: As part of the recent funding, the Province asked BCBC, BCAFN and VIU to develop an IILP sustainability plan.

Phase II 2023-2027: Federal government funding was secured for an additional four years. 4-year partnership between VIU and Okanagan College in BC's Southern Interior.

Phase III 2027+: Seeking partnership opportunities with various levels of government, program partners, economic development groups, post-secondary institutions,

IILP: From WIL Experience to Career Pathway DISCUSSION

Work-Integrated Learning

(IILP)

- Paid 2-year internship
- Real workplace experience
- Cross-sector employer partnerships

Career Transition Supports

- Mentorship & leadership development
- Professional training
- Networking & alumni community

Career Outcomes

- Meaningful employment
- Long-term career pathways
- Indigenous leadership & workforce participation

Moving beyond placements → Building sustained, relationship-based career pathways

To find out more about IILP



Online:



okanagan.bc.ca/IILP

indigenous.viu.ca/indigenous-intern-leadership



Email:

Patrick Brennan, IILP Program Manager at Patrick.Brennan@viu.ca



Promotional Information:

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Questions?

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