Interview Guide (Updated May 6, 2024, SW)

- *Introductions*
- *Before we begin, we want to make sure you understand that by participating in this interview you are providing your implied and informed consent.*
- *We would like to record the interview only for notetaking purposes on our device, would you consent to that, or would you prefer not to have it recorded?*

Questions:

1. What work have you done, and what work do you know of that pertains to the histories and relations of the lands and First Nations on which the university is now located?
    a. Before I came to UVic, I was at Csmosun. And so I've done a lot of work there and here with local elders, and sort of being able to bring them or provide post secondary students with opportunities to engage with the local Elders here. And then, within my own coursework, I bring local people in to do different workshops. A lot of my work has worked with cedar. I'll do weaving workshops, things like that. I grew up down here, I grew up in WSANEC territory, I now live in lekwungen. So, I have pretty strong ties to the local communities and a number of Elders. Pretty strong, considering I'm not from here, and I'm not I am not a local person here. So, I struggle, I think, to answer the question fully, because a lot of the work that I've done locally is in relation to my work at this institution.
    b. And so I'm trying to, instead of having students read a story, or you know, listen to me talk about this place, I like to invite people in from here who can actually be like, well, this is where my family's lands are. And then they're able to provide a context that I can't. And I find that it's really helpful for students who are either Indigenous and not from here, or non-Indigenous to be able to actually hear from someone who is here. And then for students who are from here, it's really great, because they're in a place where they don't necessarily get to see themselves reflected on a daily basis. But, you know, one of their relatives comes in, or someone that they grew up with comes in to speak, and I think it's really meaningful in that way. And I just think that it's so important to not just acknowledge that I work and live in someone else's territory, but to actually go beyond that by saying, I want to acknowledge it further by inviting you in to talk about whatever is happening.

    Shae: Yes, land acknowledgements can be performative.

    c. I spent the whole class just talking about my acknowledgments, recognizing that the land acknowledgement UVic has, took a decade to get to that place. But I think of it as a starting point, a place from which if you know nothing, this is where you can start. But it really needs to be as you grow with it, it needs to be

the kind of thing that you take personal ownership over. It can't just be words, it has to be something that you practice. I got a whole lecture on the land acknowledgments and what you need to do and how to go about it.

Kate: Did you find the students were engaged?

- Yeah, because the feedback I hear from students is that it loses meaning when it's just something a teacher, chair, or someone reads at the beginning of something. It's hard to find value, I think, for that or for people to, and then they're not offered anything else, right? It's read, it's probably not even talked about in a lot of courses. And so you're just kind of left with it, like go look at the website, and read it again, if you want. But for me, part of my responsibility as being a guest in these lands. And I say guest over visitor because, again, I guess, I'm allowed to say that. And so yeah, I think we need to be having conversations about why and how that land acknowledgement is important, but also how to move beyond it, how to think about it. Not as something that is just a checkbox.

2. How would you describe the impact and importance of Indigenous artwork on campus in fostering relationships and storying the history of First Nations with UVic?
    a. That's super important. And it is important because we have to move beyond a, you know, we've got totem poles, kind of attitude, right? Those poles are stories they have meaning they're connected to families, they're connected to people who created them. And, you know, I think I think of them less as objects, that someone may pass by 100 times and never actually pay attention to. **What they are visible representations that Indigenous students belong here.** And so the First People's house is an amazing example of that. The Indigenous law building is going to be very similar to that. Students walk into campus, and instead of just seeing concrete everywhere they see, well, if you're from the coast, you see what resembles the longhouse. Down at Camoson, they've got outdoor space that resembles a cedar hat. These things are really important for bringing Indigenous faculty and students to the campus and having them go, oh, that's a place that I can go and I can belong, without question.
    b. That's really, really important. So, when I first graduated, after my MA, I got a job working there. And eventually, I was working as sort of an indigenous advisor. But, you know, there are so many stories of Indigenous students coming up just to the sort of the border of campus, and then turning around and going, because they didn't feel like it was a place for them. Or, you know, one of the buildings reminds them of the residential school that was in their community. And so we need to change that narrative. And I think we can do that through art. And so whether that's really clear examples of local artists doing things, or you know, on

the island, we talked about the three the three nations. Straight Coast Salish, Nuu chah nulth, and Kwakwaka'wakw. It's having those artworks included.

c. I'm also on a couple of committees where we're looking at a better way to bring indigenous art onto campus as well. Because the way in which our people engage with art is different than the way the university does. Where it might be well, we've purchased this so it's ours, versus while you've purchased this, but it doesn't remove the connection that the artist and their family or their nation or stories in which that artwork comes from. Or, understanding that a pole has a life of its own and requires ceremony in order to be raised, and as its life comes to an end it goes back to the earth, and that's okay too. That understanding of that's not as something that we need to then preserve. While we can conserve it and take care of it while it's in our care, but also understanding that as their life cycle comes to an end, that's okay.
d. One of my favourite stories is Hjalmer Wenstob Tla-o-qui-aht artist, he carved this mask, which is an exhibit right now. But occasionally, when his family needs to do something cultural, they'll get it and have a little card saying, this piece is being used culturally. I think that's such an amazing way of understanding and helping people who don't come from an Indigenous perspective or hadn't really thought about it that way. It's a great way of understanding that sometimes what we think about as art is actually living and breathing and participates in culture. Instead of just being put on a wall and or behind a glass case. These things are meant to be used in a lot of cases. So I think art is a really fundamental way, and to be fair, I think it's a really easy way of sharing, or visibly acknowledging that indigenous people can be here.
e. Same with Indigenous place names. Local people walk up, and if they don't know their language, which a lot of us don't, they can at least recognize and say hey, that's, that's lekwungen, or SENĆOŦEN. That's maybe a place that I can fit into.

Kate: So in your work with that committee, have you seen the university kind of trying to change how it engages with art and maintain those relationships?

- Yes, I think that's fair to say. And this committee is, I think it's the Indigenous Arts Procurement Committee. That's what they're doing. They're coming up with a guide for people who are like, we want to have indigenous art, right? Because a lot of people are just like, well, we want some indigenous art, but they don't even know what that means. You know, and then it's like, Well, do you want to have local Coast Salish and Straight Salish Art? Do you want lekwungen or WSANEC? What does that mean, it's too general. So having a sense of that kind of stuff is really important. You know, and understanding the costs and why things cost what they do.

    - My wife is cedar weaver. We do workshops and classes, and things like that. But when I show up, I've got a bunch of cedar that people can then weave. They feel really great because they've been able to do something like weave a bracelet or hat or something. But what they don't know is that they got to do the last 2%. The 98% was, last week, we were out harvesting, so we had to drive four hours, then a mile in, to go harvest in our territory for a few hours. And then we have to dry it and clean it. And so it takes a year. My wife doesn't weave with stuff she just pulled. She's always weaving with the last years and stuff because there's she goes through this process of cleaning, prepping it. You know, there's a lot of prep that goes into it. So people look at some of the prices of, you know, a cedar hat. That's so expensive. But, you know, they're seeing the final product, not all of the work that's that goes into getting it to that place.
- So those examples like with the mask being used culturally and can access it, have there been any of those kinds of relationships on campus?
    - I'm not super familiar, but I can think for sure of some commissioned art. But again, the people that I'm thinking who are commissioning it, know that Have you have relationships and so they're like, Hey, we're thinking this, and then they go out, talk to people in community and go in with an understanding that this is what it's going to cost, this is how long it's going to take and this is what it means that we're taking responsibility to care for it, we're not taking ownership. I think that's why, why it's important that they're sort of the larger policy or guidelines.
    - I think of it too, is like when you want to request an elder for a class, or an event, and you go to the IACE website and it says if you're inviting an elder to a meeting, and you're asking for their advice, you should be prepared to take it. People don't necessarily know that. They think, oh, we'll just invite an elder to sort of come in. But then when the community comes back and says, well, you know, our elder said, you need to do this, why haven't you done it? Things like that, right? Or when you are asking for a welcome, this is what it actually means, versus you just want someone to come in and acknowledge.
    - We're really lucky though that we have those relationships, that those communities can give us some teachings so that we're able to walk in there without, destroying any relationships or messing up so badly. It's a whole other thing. So it's yeah, it's really fortunate to have people to be able to say, here's the teaching for you. Here's how you can do this. Here's how you can walk in this place.
3. What research would you like to see conducted about UVic's relationships and legacy moving forward?

a. I would like to see research into where the institution really stands on the idea of land back. It's one thing to say that we recognize this is lekwungen territory, or depending on who you're talking to, there's a there's a shared territory really close to here. I know we could go into community and they could say, well, this place on campus, this is its name, and this is what this family did here, this is who is responsible for these places. I think it'd be really interesting to know, if communities were going to share that with UVic, what does UVic plan to do with that? I think it's really important to practice, and I'm reluctant to say reconciliation, I just can't think of a better word, but it's one thing to talk about reconciliation, but then never actually walk that path. Maybe there is space for that kind of a recognition. A lekwungen family lived here at one time. Right?
b. You know, we have all of this information about UVic, we have all of these plaques about different donors or important people, but you don't necessarily see that, a plaque in the Quad that says, you know, this is where lekwungen people and this family once harvested camas. Or where this building now stands was a longhouse. I don't know if any of that's accurate, but you know what I mean, right? Like we have this really comprehensive map for getting around UVic, but there's not much indigenous presence on that. Other than the First People's house, and there's a there's like a Indigenous art walk brochure that you can do.
c. I think the library is a really interesting place because it's part of this concrete rectangle and a repository of knowledge, written knowledge. But how is it that, other knowledge isn't there? It's a repository of knowledge, how come we are prioritizing books? Maybe they're not anymore, and there's a few things going on to kind of indigenize it a bit, but, I think those things are really, important. O
d. If I was thinking about the research, I'd be thinking about how UVic plans to be accountable and reciprocal in the relationships. You see a lot of indigenous communities giving and giving and giving, but how many PhD, MA, graduate students have indigenous communities supported to get their advanced degrees? Versus how many Indigenous community members have been able to come and get their education? And I guarantee it's a really weighted balance. Maybe the university needs to go well, your community has helped us graduate 15 advanced degrees. So we would like to help your community have, or we'll help fund 15 of your community members to come and do their work, or something. There needs to be much more visible acts of reciprocity.
e. And I'm not, I'm not saying this to kind of dump on the university. But these are the kinds of things I think about. My community has helped a lot of students get advanced degrees, and I think I'm the only one who's got advanced degrees from

UVic. We've got a few that have undergraduate degrees. We've got a few more who have degrees from Royal Roads, or UBC or other places.

f. The Banfield Marine Station, is run at University of Calgary, I believe. And so there are tons of students from UVic, and other universities coming through that place. And it's right in our territory, we have really good relationships with them. And so we do work with them pretty closely. But again, right, you've got a facility in our community, our community steps up to help out with things. But we're hired to do things so individuals get compensated, but at an institution to our governance level, I think I think there are some really interesting conversations that can be had around how the University understands reciprocity in these relationships, and whether or not they're willing to bolster those acts.

Kate: We've heard from a lot of people we've interviewed about land back, and kind of helping to really engage with what the university is willing to give up in acts of reconciliation or at least relationships.

- Yeah, and I think about in terms of museums, too. Where, from my perspective, if you have our stuff, you need to give it back. So we can then have a conversation about how to loan it with you, how to co-curate something isn't sort of salvage anthropology kind of way of thinking, but something that's more of a living way.

Shaelyn: So part of our methodology that we just came up with yesterday is the octopus methodology, where we have all these tentacles in different areas. So we're thinking about having conversations to help decolonize the library and the archives. And with art, we spoke with Lorilee.

- She's helping me with a project there. Have you talked to Ryan Moran?
- He's part of our project.
- Okay, that's good. I was gonna say, if you haven't, you should talk to him about all the cool stuff that he's got going on.

4. Might you point us towards any materials you have published or supported on this topic?
    a. I don't have a lot of publish. To sort of formal things I've got published is part of a big group. And they're more in the biological sciences, which was weird for me. And then the stuff I've got coming up are like exhibitions.
    b. Shae: Those are good too.
    c. Kate: Yeah, we're not necessarily looking for academic publications.
    d. Well, they are academic. I'm just really reluctant to put words to paper. Again, this is Andrea's influence. I tease her and I said, you know, when they look back at our careers, they're gonna go yeah, he was one of Walsh's students. Sorry, can you repeat the question? Yeah.

e. The George Clutesi exhibit. It was in the Alberni Valley Museum last year. It's at the Bill Reid Gallery until January 19, 2025, and it'll be at the Legacy gallery next year. And again, it's Andrea Walsh's. And I think she's leading it, but she might be so-leading it. She works with the team anyway, of really important, really great people. But that exhibit is deeply collaborative between George Clutesi's family, a number of Nuu-Chah-Nulth nations, scholars and artists. And so it was a bringing together of a wide range of people who have been influenced by George Clutesi's work. I think that's a really great example of, I mean, I'll hold Andrea up all day long for how she does her work. But it's a really recent example of the kind of work that she does, as a member of this institution, but working with community in a really good way, and being able to say to people who have really strict timelines saying, you know, the family needs to talk first.
f. I mean, in my own work, with my PhD research, and doing the comprehensive exams, my committee was really supportive of me creating a cultural song instead of writing a third exam. Being able to then have that put into, like our graduate handbook. And so I don't know anthropology, I've been really happy there. All three of my anthropology degrees come from that department, which is kind of rare and then to get hired, which again, is really different. But then again, you spent how many years training me? You know what you're getting with me. Having space within the department for people and having people who are really supportive of saying, a comprehensive exam can be a art piece, or a visual piece or it can be a song. I think that's been really important for ensuring Indigenous students who come into the department can see right from the get go that they don't necessarily have to leave themselves or their culture behind. They can incorporate it and as a department, I think we are open to that, even if we have no idea what that means.
g. When I came in, they said, Andrea. So I wanted to do a cultural song for my comp, and just right away she said, yeah, awesome. I gotta go do some stuff behind the scenes to figure out how we do that. To not just be shut down and go, no comprehensive exams are three papers, this is how we traditionally do it, and this is how you have to do it. **But to be open to that kind of alternative forms of knowledge and alternative ways of disseminating knowledge.** I think that's really important. You know, and then, in my own work, being able to say that, instead of publishing a paper, I'm going to harvest. Document the harvesting, processing, and weaving of cedar, and then I'm gonna have an exhibition or put a show on that shows what I've done. Because I really want to interrupt that idea. And the privilege of sight, and just being able to read. I want

people to be able to come in, and if you don't see so well, you can hear stuff, or you can interact and touch things too, right?

h. I also find it's a really effective way of protecting and layering the knowledge that I'm sharing. So in the in the exhibit I'm working on for the Legacy, it's sort of more of a sensorial kind of thing, where they're stuff you're going to be able to see and read. But the way I've arranged the song, I've screen printed them on drums. And so the words, you can't just read them and be like, I know the song. You can't memorize them and know the song because, if you're Nuu-Chah-Nulth or if you understand Nuu-Chah-Nulth language, you can sort of pick it apart, but you'll never know because all of the pieces aren't there. Unless you're me, because I know them. Or a few other people who have who have learned them in my community, right. And so there's these layers of knowledge.

i. And I think when we're at the university, we're kind of taught and in western sort of Canadian society, we're taught that all of this knowledge is out there. And all knowledge is for all of us, when in my culture, it's not. Knowledge is really powerful and can be really dangerous. And so people hold on to knowledge, and they give it as appropriate. There's a layering to how Indigenous communities share what they know. And it comes through the deepening of a relationship.

Kate: As you've been involved with the university so long as a student and professor, have you seen the faculty's engagement with Indigenous knowledge and wisdom change over time?

j. Yeah. When I was in undergrad, there was a book written by someone, probably non-Indigenous, that's going to talk about all of the first nations in BC or indigenous peoples as a general thing. I've seen over my time here a move away from deep generalization to more specifics. We have courses now on Coast and Straight Salish instead of First Nations in BC. Students who come into my classroom are, everything I talk about is from a Nuu-Chah-Nulth, Huu-ay-aht perspective. So again, more specific. Within anthropology too we've got three people who identify as Indigenous in the department, and we've got some who have an ancestry, and some who are not Indigenous but really deep relationships to the local communities. We're also seeing a move away from, lets read this book by this anthropologist to let's read this community member, or let's have this community member come in and talk to us about the thing they're doing in their community.

k. I've seen change, I would say it's probably slow as all things are. I think it's further complicated because you're working with multiple communities. The land acknowledgement is a good example of taking so long because you have to work with multiple community members. Sometimes it's a matter of saying,

here's what we would like to express and then those communities taking however long it takes internally amongst themselves and then coming back and saying here's what's going to work for us. And then do you translate it into SENĆOŦEN or lekwungen.

   l. In a case like Camosun, they have a campus that's in lekwungen territory and they have one in WSANEC territory, and one on a WSANEC reserve. In that case, when we have to make our acknowledgement, are we thinking about just the campus we're on or are we doing it more widespread, talking about all the places we work? It's not as simple as saying, we're going to acknowledge the local people.

5. Is there anyone you would recommend our group to get in touch with?
6. Is there anything else you want to share?

- Archeological sites
- Anthropology department and relationships to BIPOC and other peoples
- Song?