



NORTH ISLAND COLLEGE  
INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION PLAN  
2022-2026

# Journeying Together Annual Report

YEAR 1 REPORT

NORTH ISLAND COLLEGE  
  
VANCOUVER ISLAND, CANADA 

# JOURNEYING TOGETHER ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23

Global learning enriches the educational experience of all students at NIC, builds a diverse campus community and is key to supporting NIC's sustainability. It brings the world to NIC and provides all students with opportunities to study, learn and gain international experience. We value international students' many contributions to the communities we serve and, in the spirit of reconciliation, seek to connect international and Indigenous students and communities through formal and informal learning opportunities (TRC Call to Action #93).

In the year since launching *Journeying Together*, NIC was selected for a national Excellence in Global Engagement bronze award by Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICan) in recognition of the plan. *Journeying Together* is being referenced by researchers and educational institutions interested in exploring the transformation of international education within Canada and globally. NIC was also a finalist in the "Real life learning" category at the international PIONEER Awards in London, England. This was in recognition of the project, "Interculturality: Interweaving Indigenous Pedagogies", delivered by Laura Johnston

as part of her English 096 – First People's Literature and Composition course delivered through the Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) program.

Building on [Working Together: NIC Indigenization Plan](#), *Journeying Together* commits to working with Indigenous communities, Elders, students, faculty, the Office of Indigenous Education (OIE) and our international partners to guide the process of Indigenizing international education at NIC. This guidance sets the Office of Global Engagement (OGE) on a path to address multiple priorities: the interests of local First Nations; the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission; the process of decolonization of the institution; and the support required to establish NIC as an Indigenous serving institution.

*Indigenization is the ongoing process that calls upon us to create transformative environments across our college that promote weaving local Indigenous knowledge systems together with the distinct knowledge systems reflected across our college community. Indigenization supports a fundamental shift that enables learners, faculty and staff to understand, appreciate and mutually respect one another.*

— NIC webpage: [Reconciliation, Indigenization, Decolonization](#)

## TRULY JOURNEYING TOGETHER

At NIC, we have come to realize that the evolution of Indigenization and international education is integrally tied to the concept of what it means to be Indigenous serving.

*Our vision of weaving Indigenization and internationalization is rooted in NIC's collective commitment to become a truly Indigenous-serving institution, toward a future reimagined for the well-being of this generation and those yet to come. Our goal is to leave a legacy of hope that aligns with the beliefs and aspirations of the Indigenous people and the communities we serve.*

*— [Journeying Together: A transformative approach to Indigenization and internationalization at NIC](#), Page 2*

OIE included OGE in its Summer 2022 symposium, sparking a conversation about a collaboration between the two teams to work towards expanding Indigenization.

A parallel conversation took place globally, as OGE engaged with international partners and Indigenous people with personal experience

with colonization and educational systems designed to assimilate Indigenous people into the settler culture. As Sara Child describes,

“The struggle of Indigenous people to have our land, territory, languages, culture, ways of knowing and being reclaimed, and our history recognized is a global struggle that has been going on for generations. Is it not time to put an end to mere conversations, ramp up our efforts, and demonstrate a commitment to action?” Sara Child (2023, personal communication)

NIC brought together key individuals from diverse backgrounds, intentionally including Indigenous and non-Indigenous people from across the Pacific. Together, we created a transformative idea: “What would it mean if we were truly Indigenous serving?”

As a result of our *Journeying Together* strategy and our goal to become Indigenous serving, OIE and OGE are working together to develop:

- International Indigenous Partnerships: A Transformative Education Symposium – Spring 2024
- Waikato University (New Zealand) Indigenous Field School - Spring 2024
- College and Community Social Innovation Fund/Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (CCSIF/NSERC) Virtual Technology project: Indigenous culture revitalization – over 3 years (\$360,000)
- Global Skills Opportunity (GSO – Federal) Indigenous COIL/VE Special Topics

Framework – A Versatile Framework Interweaving Virtual Collaboration Projects - one year (\$120,000)

- Professional Development (PD) – Indigenous COIL: *Galgapōla* (“Supporting one another”): What does it mean to be an Indigenous serving institution?
- Japan Field School: Indigeneity and Japan Transpacific Migration
- Indigenous International Partnership Agreements including processes based in Indigenous protocol and ceremony
- GSO Innovation: “Breaking out of the Box” Non-traditional toolkit for international study abroad and intercultural exchange (student and faculty resources)
- Sustainable, no-strings-attached international revenue earmarked to support OIE with international presentations and targeted project delivery that uphold the goals of *Journeying Together*

## PARTNERSHIPS

Multiple institutions – national and international – have approached OGE and OIE for updates on our progress and on developments in the overall process. Additionally, based on our strong Indigenous/international partnerships in Hawaii, Costa Rica, Mexico and Brazil, we have been contacted by institutions in Australia, Ireland and New Zealand, who are working on expanding their Indigenous partnerships to strengthen their community/educational relationships.



*NIC Language revitalization field school participants arriving in Hawaii*

Partnerships make all this work possible and extremely rewarding. One such partnership, to which NIC owes a great debt of gratitude, is with Nawa'a Napoleon, Vice Chancellor of Kapi'olani Community College and the Hawaiian community. Their support was pivotal in developing the concept of what it means to be Indigenous serving and in delivering our Indigenous Language Revitalization Field School.

## SHARING WITH THE WORLD

Through 2022/23, OGE and OIE presented at five international education conferences to build awareness and expand the network of like-minded institutions. NIC representatives and partner presenters included:

Kelly Shopland, Executive Director, Office of Indigenous Education

Sara Child, Indigenous Learning Facilitator

Romana Pasca, Manager, International Partnerships, Projects and Global Education

Mark Herring, Executive Director, Office of Global Engagement

Nawa'a Napoleon, Vice Chancellor, Kapi'olani Community College

### European Association for International Education (EAIE) Poster Session

- Exploring the intersection between Indigenization and internationalization across borders

### Colleges and Institutes Canada/World Congress Sessions/Award

- Rural Institution Pre-Conference: Indigenizing International Education - A Rural Institution Perspective
- Galgapa ("Supporting One Another")
- Pulling Together: Developing Canada's First Indigenizing Internationalization Plan
- Excellence in Global Engagement Award (Bronze)

### Canadian Bureau for International Education Session

- Fostering Inclusive International Learning Experiences

### Association of International Educators (NAFSA) Sessions

- Symposium on Leadership: Decolonization, Indigenization, and International Education
- Pulling Together: Indigenizing International Education - A Vancouver Island Perspective

### BC International Education Week Session

- Pulling Together: Implementing Canada's First Indigenizing Internationalization

In spring 2024, OIE will work with OGE to bring our international Indigenous partner institutions together on Vancouver Island for NIC's proposed 'International Indigenous Partnerships: Transformative Education Symposium'. The symposium's goal is to begin comparing our institutional and community experiences internationally on our shared journey of weaving a new future for education.

## INTERNATIONALIZATION AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

To properly address the priorities raised by the process of Indigenizing international education at NIC, we are first questioning the concept of the process of internationalization itself and taking a critical look at what we actually mean by "internationalization".

"Internationalization is not just embedded in systems of power; rather, it is a tool used to wield power and therefore cannot be neutral. The process, concept, and construction of internationalization have power in defining which people, organizations, locations/ environments, processes, outcomes, and (research) agendas are centered or silenced when HEIs (higher education institutions) engage globally." George Mwangi & Yao (2021, p.555)

In many cases, the process of internationalization has become associated primarily with the revenue generated through the

recruitment of international students. OGE and OIE are committed to the Indigenization of international education, first and foremost, as an institutionally transformative process.

We are also considering those things represented through the application of non-critical concepts of 'global citizenship' – a term now used ubiquitously in higher education as a marketing tool and desired 'outcome' of a higher-education experience. In reality, students face multiple global and local challenges in which the application of Indigenous pedagogies is a reasonable response.

“The imperative [of global citizenship must be] to ethically integrate the gifts of multiple knowledge traditions and practices, in particular those of Indigenous communities, so that we might draw on an “ecology of knowledges” (Santos, 2007) to respond to these problems in ways that contribute to greater collective wellbeing...” Stein, S. & Andreotti, V. (2021). *Global citizenship otherwise*. In E. Bosio (Ed.), *Conversations on global citizenship education: Research, teaching and learning* (pp. 13-36). Routledge

## IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of *Journeying Together* truly needs to be centered on the journey rather than the destination, as we transform from a process founded in colonial principles to one guided by the knowledge, cultural traditions and aspirations of Indigenous communities.



*NIC DGL students participating in a joint project with Politecnia de Santa Rosa Jouregul, Queretoro, Mexico (2022)*

These unique perspectives on education, cross-cultural engagement and sustainable development are invaluable in shaping an effective and culturally sensitive international education strategy. To ensure an authentic, respectful approach that applies to the inherent strengths of Indigenous communities – locally and globally – together, we must encourage the development and implementation of what this means at NIC.

The leadership of local Indigenous communities will set the foundation for a plan that reflects the specific needs and aspirations of the College's immediate surroundings, fostering a strong connection with the land and people. Guidance from diverse Indigenous-community partners globally will provide varied perspectives on what it means to be Indigenous serving. These partnerships will facilitate the exchange of ideas, shared experiences and

mutual support, advancing a sense of solidarity among Indigenous communities.

This community-driven approach generates multiple benefits: empowering Indigenous voices; promoting decolonization in education; expanding our awareness of what it means to be Indigenous serving; and paving the way for a truly transformative and equitable Indigenized international education plan.

In the future we envision, Indigenous equity exists fully across the academy and throughout our global society. Working together with local Indigenous communities and an expanding network of Indigenous partners from around the world will focus the conversation and support us in charting our way forward on this vitally important journey.

## OPERATIONAL AREAS

OGE operations have evolved to address our commitment to the Climate Action Network for International Education (CANIE) Accord and to support Indigenous, community-based research. Funding has been transferred from the international travel budget to support two Indigenous kelp food projects (Nass Foods project, Tofino and Kelp Habitat Banking, Wee Wai Kai and Wee Wai Kum) through the NIC Centre for Applied Research Technology and Innovation (CARTI). These projects are considered environmental offsets for annual OGE travel activity. Together with other initiatives – reduced print sizes and brochure pages for marketing, targeted travel reductions, reduced use of housekeeping at hotel stays, etc. – they have become part of the environmental culture at OGE.

In human resources, each area of responsibility at OGE experienced significant change in 2022/23, as the team rebuilt post-pandemic programming. Changes to the OGE team:

### Advising

Agalya Kathirvelu, International Student Advisor

### Admissions

Manpreet Kaur, International Admissions Officer

Amy Collins, International Admissions Officer

Nellie Switzer, International Admissions Assistant

### Global Engagement

Rena Leboe, Global Engagement Liaison (Projects)

Mike Hillian, Global Engagement Liaison (Partnerships and Services)

### Recruitment and Enrolment

Katie Phelan, Communications Specialist

## RECRUITMENT AND ENROLMENT

Global learning is a strategic priority for NIC that commits to expanding international enrolment and international partnership agreements while maintaining a high level of international student satisfaction in NIC's supportive learning environment. The College's integrated-enrolment planning process has identified optimal international student enrolment at 600 full-time enrolments (FTEs) by 2026 (one-fifth of the total 3,000 FTEs).

On track to achieving this target, NIC enrolled 409 international student FTEs in 2022/23, demonstrating a healthy recovery, following two years of decline due to impacts of the pandemic – locally and globally. International student enrolment is expected to continue to grow in 2023/24, with additional intakes at each of NIC's Port Alberni, Comox Valley and Campbell River campuses.

OGE holds regular enrolment-management meetings with NIC deans, the VP Academic and Director of Institutional Research and Planning to maximize capacities. This means identifying and developing new or re-packaged programming and cohort opportunities, particularly outside the Comox Valley campus. Successful international-student cohorts have been delivered in Early Childhood Care and Education and Culinary Business programs. Plans for further cohorts

in these programs as well as in Health Care Assistant are helping to meet local labour-market needs. The *BC Labour Market Outlook 2022-2032 Forecast* estimates that new people to Canada will fill 38% of BC's anticipated 1,017,000 job openings over the next ten years.

## GLOBAL EXPERIENCE

Beyond its work with international students, OGE connects all members of the NIC community – students, staff and faculty – with opportunities to study abroad and participate in international partnerships and projects. OGE granted 45 study-abroad scholarships for students participating through either virtual or physical mobility in 2022/23, including two field schools in Indigenous Language Revitalization (Hawaii) and Advanced Topics in Design (Mexico). OGE also provided opportunities for two students to enroll in a double-business degree with NIC/Université Savoie Mont Blanc (France) and one student to participate in a one-year exchange with University of Transylvania Brasov (Romania). NIC students can study internationally in over 14 countries, while benefiting from NIC's low tuition – the lowest on Vancouver Island and one of the most affordable in BC.

Exchange students from 14 universities outside of Canada were hosted at NIC, enriching our learning environments across a variety of programs. Additionally, with the support of CARTI, NIC has hosted research students from our partners in Belgium to complete environmental research objectives.

OGE expanded international project agreements in 2022/23 by securing a four-year contract to participate in the “Empowerment Through Skills” program in Tanzania in partnership with Nova Scotia Community College and Saskatchewan Polytechnic. Sponsored by CICan and the Government of Canada, the program supports the development of community-demand-driven, competency-based, gender- and human-rights-responsive skills training programs. It aims to increase participation among women and adolescent girls in skills-training programs and improve access to business, skills and gender- and human-rights training in their communities. This project supplements our ongoing project work in Kenya, in partnership with Vancouver Island University and BC Institute of Technology.

NIC established new international, institutional partnerships in New Zealand, prompting interest from Australia, Romania, Spain, Peru and the Philippines. In addition to delivering international field schools and virtual exchange opportunities, NIC faculty have engaged in international-capacity-development projects (Kenya and Tanzania) and participated in the Leave for Change program (Sri Lanka). Three NIC students returned from exchanges and five NIC students are preparing for exchange in 2023/24.

COIL – Virtual Exchange training was supported for three faculty members through Florida International University. COIL programs were delivered by the Digital Design and Development program (one instructor and 12 Canadian students) with the Universidade Federal do Amazonas, Brazil and the Global Nursing project (one faculty and three students) with University Colleges Leuven-Limburg, Belgium.

## INTERCULTURAL ENGAGEMENT

OGE supported International Education Week and International Development Week activities, inviting all students, faculty and staff to participate. Indigenous language and culture sessions (cedar weaving and traditional medicine) were developed for 30 students to learn at K’ómoks First Nation from Nation members, including two Elders.

OIE partnered with OGE to deliver a Homalco “Day on the Land” event that engaged 24

faculty, staff and administrators in activities traditional to Homalco First Nation.

In collaboration with NIC’s Centre for Teaching & Learning Innovation (CTLI), OGE delivered intercultural resources to support faculty and students. These include the Brightspace courses, “Enhancing Intercultural Understanding and Engagement” and “Breaking Out of the Box” to help faculty prepare students culturally and socially for study abroad. Workshops were also delivered during May Professional Development Days to support faculty in the process of interculturalizing courses.



*OGE staff retreat to We Wai Kai First Nation/ Quadra Island*

In collaboration with CARTI and OIE, OGE won NSERC funding for a virtual-reality project in partnership with Huu-ay-aht First Nation to support language revitalization and tourism opportunities.

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SUPPORT

Following the decline in international-student numbers due to the pandemic, student enrolment has rebounded to its third-highest level in NIC history. This prompted us to reevaluate our international-student processes:

- How students are prepared before arriving in our communities
- How we can fully support them in securing accommodation
- How to apply lessons learned with virtual orientations from COVID to re-vamp the student orientation program
- How we can meet students' academic and mental-health needs as they begin and continue their studies
- How to best address the TRC Call to Action #93 in preparing international students as visitors and potential immigrants to this land

International Student Support (ISS), coordinated through OGE, has built a multi-faceted program for new and continuing international students in each of the above areas. Some highlights include:

- Cultural sharing opportunities at Orientation and throughout the year, in partnership with K'ómoks First Nation

- Activities such as tubing at Mt. Washington, trip to Tofino, 'Frunch' (friends who lunch), potluck and bhangra-dancing festival and various holiday events
- Expanded international student leadership through hiring International Peer Connectors at each campus
- Ongoing data tracking of international student access to Early Assist to inform us of trends and changing student needs
- Increased engagement with local school districts to support local international high-school students considering programs at NIC

## SOME OF THE DIRECTIONS GUIDING OGE IN THE COMING YEAR AND BEYOND

- Evaluating international capacity limitations and options to develop new programming - regular and cohort
- Considering international project capacities and assessing our resources to 'lead' a capacity-building project
- Advocating for continuation of federal study-abroad funding past 2024
- Remaining true to place and communities (e.g., Indigenized international agreement processes)
- Exploring collaboration and co-creation opportunities (e.g., Working Together Working Group (WTWG) - Indigenous/International Sessions)

- Strengthening the Indigenous/intercultural link through the Indigenous Learning Facilitator and Global Learning Facilitator
- Following EduCanada/Global Affairs Canada's International Education Strategy Renewal and Indigenous Participation
- Providing feedback/input on Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada's (IRCC) new strategy
- Continuing to develop external engagement opportunities and sustainable partnerships
- Considering membership in World Indigenous Higher Education Council (WINHEC)/University of the Arctic
- Expanding cultural connections into orientations and regular on-campus activities in collaboration with OIE
- Building processes, in collaboration with deans, for planning and budgeting for international-field-school development, faculty support and delivery
- Improving data collection and analysis in all areas



