

FIT Final Report, March 24, 2022.

Project Title: Planting Reconciliation

Project Lead: Melissa Walter, Ph.D., Associate Professor and Head, Department of English

Overview of Learning Activities Planned and Undertaken

The project to re-conceptualize and re-design the former UFV Shakespeare Garden as a new garden on the CEP campus began in Winter 2019 with an interdisciplinary studies course funded by the College of Arts, with Elder support from Elder Terry Prest.

FIT funding was approved for a course to continue the project, finalize the garden design, and build the garden. Students in two co-scheduled courses (an IDS 300 and an IDS 100) then worked on this implementation phase of the project in Winter 2020.

In the IDS 300 and IDS 100 courses funded by FIT in Winter 2020, students reviewed the vision articulated by the Winter 2019 course. They learned about Indigenous plants and plant use from books, Indigenous knowledge keepers, and academics such as Nancy Turner and Alan Reid; learned about the specific soil structure and other site influences on the garden site; learned about the specific needs of plants in the garden; learned about the history of the former Shakespeare garden; developed additional respect and appreciation of Indigenous ways of knowing; participated in the design process for the final garden design on its final site; and finalized plant selection in relation to nursery availability lists. They measured out the garden space, dug up the turf to create space for the paths, and worked on sourcing the plants and hard scape elements. They also wrote up text to go with each plant for a website.

Due to COVID, the construction of the garden had to be halted after only a small amount of ground preparation had been achieved in spring 2020.

The Facilities Department continued site preparation (donating a concrete planter, in-ground irrigation pipes, and other additional site prep to the project).

Much of the planting of the garden was completed by volunteers (including former students in the classes, volunteer faculty and staff from Indigenous Affairs, English, Theatre, and other areas, and community members, including children) in June 2021.

Additional planting of bulbs continued in Fall 2021, October 12 and 15. On October 12th, students from AGRI 123 planted bulbs in the garden, and on Friday October 15th, volunteers planted bulbs and weeded.

With the announcement of the discovery of the unmarked graves of children who died at the Kamloops residential school, an additional area was added to the garden in May-June 2020 (to the left of the walkway as one enters A building from the east), and orange flowers were added to both the original site and the additional area.

Currently still underway is the finalization of some aspects of the hard scape as well as the garden website (the latter funded by the Peace and Reconciliation Centre and the College of Arts).

People involved:

--**Students** in the Winter 2020 courses were Kristin Campbell, Brea McChesney, Melody McLeod, Maile Rabang-Gomez, Cortney Russell, Alexis Sims, Catana Tommy, Brian Duong, Paula Maria Eraso, Leah Hamm, Christopher Hegquist, Rajneel Reddy, Deborah Tuck, Jessica Tuck, and Raven Turchinetz.

--**Instructors** in Winter 2020 were myself and Alan Reid (UFV biology--Alan donated time and was present for about half the classes), with consultative support from Shirley Hardman.

--**Guest speakers** in Winter 2020 were

--Renee Prasad (UFV Agriculture)--we co-scheduled two class sessions so that IDS 300/100 would share a field trip and a guest speaker (Dr. Turner) with Dr. Prasad's Sustainable Agriculture class, Agriculture 371.

--Steven Marsh (UFV Geography)--guest speaker at our field trip to Stony Creek in Abbotsford, where he spoke about the stream and water quality.

--Camielle Laslo (Leq'amel)--guest speaker at our field trip to Stony Creek where she talked about plants on that site, including related names and stories, from her Indigenous knowledge keeping perspective.

--Elder Mary Gutierrez, Elder David Gutierrez, and Josephine Charlie--taught plant stories, the significance of plants, and beading.

--Rose Morrison (UFV Agriculture) and her AGRI 204 (Soils) class--the Agriculture students presented their findings on the CEP soil to the garden students and took questions.

--David Shayler and Christine Jones (UFV Facilities department) attended several classes and providing input on the developing design.

--Elder Terry Prest continued to provide support to the class and students as needed.

--Dr. Nancy Turner, CM, OBC, FRSC, FLS, Professor Emeritus at the University of Victoria, gave a presentation open to UFV and local community, visited the Sustainable Agriculture garden near the river on CEP, did plant cuttings in the greenhouse with the garden classes and AGRI 371 (Sustainable Agriculture), and attended a lunch with students from our classes as well as Indigenous elders and community members.

--Students in AG 371 led a plant cuttings workshop for students in the IDS classes, also attended by Nancy Turner and Indigenous Elders, during Nancy Turner's visit.

--**Foundational advisor** to the project: Shirley Hardman.

--**Student in 2019 course, design input, and presenter:** Alysha Collie (UFV biology grad, Soowahlie)

--**Student grantwriter** (student in IDS 100, 2020) who won a grant for garden plants for an Indigenous granting organization supporting Indigenous youth: Alexis Sims (first year student, Métis)

--**PARC Interns** in 2021 and 2022: UFV students/grads Harla Sidhu and Aidan Goulet.

--**Community Donors** to the garden in 2021 include

--Dr. Brian Minter of Minter Country Gardens.

--Michael Kato of Kato's Nursery.

--**Volunteers in planting the garden in 2021:** PARC director Keith Carlson, members of the Indigenous Affairs office, English department members and their children, members of the former theatre program, President Joanne Maclean, members of the College of Arts including Dean Jacqueline Nolte, and former garden students, and community members including Dallas Yellowfly of 3 crows productions, Teresa Carlson, and children of students, faculty and staff, --Students in Jennifer Ryan's Agriculture 123 (Intro to Horticulture) planted bulbs in Fall 2021.

1. Apply reconciliation (students). In their design choices, recommendations for the garden and write-ups about the plants, students applied their growing experience and understanding of reconciliation.

After Nancy Turner's public lecture, which was extremely well attended by members of the UFV and local community, and her visit to our class (which included the lecture, lunch, and plant cuttings session), a student in the garden class wrote,

“...I found the whole experience with Nancy Turner and the elders wonderful. I left with the understanding that my education, knowledge, and world view for most of my life has been very two dimensional[...]. I felt like today was a step to the side for me, changing my perspective. Please pass along my gratitude to everyone else that helped make this happen.”

2. Build Relationships (students). The students in the IDS class included third year agriculture students, general studies students preparing for a teaching degree (with past professional backgrounds including management in the food safety industry, and others), and first-year students in an Indigenous Academic Success cohort. By participating together in this class and working together to plan the garden and articulate its significance, the students built relationships with each other. In addition, they experienced a wide variety of guest speakers in the class, including both professors and peers. The Indigenous Student Centre co-hosted a lunch for the students and for Nancy Turner. Learning activities included beading and working together on the garden itself. Students in Renee Prasad's Agriculture class led a plant cuttings workshop, working one-on-one with the IDS students, Nancy Turner, and participating Elders to make cuttings. Students in Rose Morrison's Soils class (AGRI 204) gave a presentation to the IDS class, introducing the IDS students both to soils information and to a group of students they might otherwise not have met.

3. Sustainable gardening. Students learned about cuttings, gardening in a way that is good for bees and birds, making good planting choices (choosing the right plant for the site) and site preparation.

Team Members

1. Apply Understanding of Reconciliation. I believe that we are learning and developing capacity in this area. This article from the UFV blog expresses some of the intention and feeling

of the garden as of 2021: <https://blogs.ufv.ca/blog/2021/07/after-a-decade-the-beloved-shakespeare-garden-returns-to-campus-with-an-expanded-purpose/>

2. Build working relationships. Working relationships have begun or been strengthened among Alan Reid, Renee Prasad, Shirley Hardman, David Shayler, Christine Jones, Mark Goudsblom, Rebekah Brackett, Betty Peters, Laura (Lolehawk) Buker, Melissa Walter, among others. We also began a university relationship with Nancy Turner.

3. Develop capacity as Indigenized faculty and staff. In our work in this course, non-Indigenous faculty and staff developed further relationships with Indigenous colleagues. We had the opportunity to listen and learn from Elders in a holistic way. We felt the importance of relationships in any learning environment. We saw how the physical maintenance and form of UFV shapes learning. We reflected on what it means to live, learn and work--and plant a garden-- in Stó:lō territory. Our garden project continually brought us to acknowledge Stó:lō territory. We reflected on how we can better fulfil our responsibilities as outlined in the Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. I hope others agree that we have made gains as Indigenized faculty and staff.

Institution.

1. Create physical space of healing and reflection. Gardens always continue to grow and evolve, but the essentials of this garden have been created. It has a beautiful design and shape and contains berries to nibble, plants for tea-making, and beautiful scents as well as sights.

2 & 3. Building, Repairing and Sustaining relationships with external communities.

--The presentation of the first garden plan, in Spring 2019, was very well received by the Indigenization Committee of Senate and guests.

--The visit of Nancy Turner was also a public outreach event that was extremely uplifting and beneficial to relationships for all who were able to attend, including many Indigenous Elders as well as UFV faculty, staff, students, and other community members.

--Garden plantings in Spring 2021 were attended by volunteers from the UFV community and their children.

--The garden presentation in June 2021 was very well attended with about 75 people present including Elder Terry Prest, Keith and Teresa Carlson, Elder Nancy Pennier, Elder David Gutierrez, as well as Doug and Katie Wickers from the former Friends of the Theatre, Dr. Virginia Cooke (English, Dramatic literature, Professor Emerita UFV), Heather Robertson (UFV Theatre) and her partner, Bruce Kirkley (UFV Theatre/Program Development), and others associated with the former garden. UFV Grounds Supervisor Christine Jones (who was also a student in the class that created the original garden on the former campus) and groundskeepers were also present, as was Craig Toews.

4. Recognition as a creative and innovative centre of Reconciliation and Indigenized learning.

--The garden and the accompanying website aim to contribute to this goal.

--The website should be finalized, at least in its current form, in spring 2022. Here is the draft site: <http://draft.shakespeareconciliationgarden.ca>

--The garden can continue to welcome volunteers and be a teaching site. Please contact melissa.walter@ufv.ca or alan.reid@ufv.ca to get involved!