NEXT STEPS
REBUILDING INDIGENOUS LAW

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MEDIA RELEASE
Embargoed until November 26, 2025

The University of Victoria Announces Another Global First, Next Steps: Rebuilding Indigenous Law — A New Indigenous-Led Initiative to Revitalize Legal Orders

November 26, 2025, Victoria, BC — The University of Victoria's Faculty of Law is taking another bold move to empower Indigenous societies to renew and rebuild their own legal systems by launching the **Next Steps: Rebuilding Indigenous Law** initiative.

"UVic is in the forefront of a profound shift in how education and research can be done—with Indigenous Peoples as co-creators and leaders," said **Qwul'sih'yah'maht, Dr. Robina Thomas, President, University of Victoria**. "Next Steps not only represents a model of collaboration rooted in respect, reciprocity, and Indigenous sovereignty, it is our committed response to the Truth and Reconciliation (TRC) Calls to Action."

Next Steps is dedicated to rebuilding entire Indigenous legal orders, focusing on all areas of law. It builds upon the foundation of UVic's leadership in Indigenous legal empowerment through the Indigenous Legal Research Unit (ILRU) and its innovative combined Common Law and Indigenous Law (JD/JID) degree.

"We are expanding the scope and scale of work to rebuild and comprehensively restore Indigenous law in Canada," said **Dr. Val Napoleon, Founder and Academic Lead for Next Steps**. "There is no intact indigenous legal order that will spring to life with its mere recognition. This work is about self-determination in action. Indigenous Peoples have vibrant, sophisticated legal systems that have governed our lands and relationships from before time. Rebuilding these systems is the foundation for a just future for indigenous peoples and for Canada."

The process of rebuilding Indigenous legal orders reaffirms Indigenous laws as living systems that can help solve today's problems, in communities and beyond. It serves as a model of Indigenous self-determination that can inspire similar initiatives worldwide.

The first project is underway with the Secwépemc Nation. They have been selected based on their previous work building a strong foundation for revitalizing Secwépemc legal orders, both independently and in collaboration with ILRU.

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Next Steps is in alignment with and furthers the goals and principles of Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Calls to Action and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), as well as the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls' (MMIWG) Calls to Justice, the Canada United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (UNDA), and the British Columbia United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA).

Next Steps: Rebuilding Indigenous Law and the University of Victoria Faculty of Law thank the **Law Foundation of BC** for its generous $10 million contribution to this initiative. This investment drives meaningful societal transformation by actively supporting the self-determination of Indigenous Peoples for years to come.

For more information, go to www.nextstepsindigenouslaw.ca

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B-roll, video clips, audio, and photos available upon request

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