



**University
of Victoria**

Graduate Studies

Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Master of Arts

of

BRIGITTE BENNING

BA (University of Victoria, 2015)

**“Exploring the Role of Indigenous-Based Support in Post-Secondary
Education: The On-Campus Friendship Centre at Grande Prairie
Regional College”**

Department of Sociology

Thursday, July 12, 2018
10:30AM
Cornett Building
Room A317

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Garry Gray, Department of Sociology, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Cecilia Benoit, Department of Sociology, UVic (Member)

External Examiner:

Dr. Jean-Paul Restoule, Department of Indigenous Education, Uvic

Chair of Oral Examination:

Dr. Adam Con, School of Music, UVic

Dr. Stephen V. Evans, Acting Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies

Abstract

In response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of 2015, there is a national movement within Canada to better support Indigenous students in post-secondary institutions. Research that is strength-based, Indigenous-led, and community-focused recognizes the wealth of existing Indigenous knowledge, practices and programs across Canada. This includes the variety of interventions which are being employed to Indigenize and decolonize post-secondary institutions, such as the On-Campus Friendship Centre at Grande Prairie Regional College. The On-Campus Friendship Centre, which is an Indigenous-based support program for students, has been running for nearly two decades. Nationally, there are 125 Friendship Centres, yet the On-Campus Friendship Centre is the *only* one that is directly situated within a post-secondary institution. Through the guidance of my Métis Sash Research Framework, which I created to reconcile Indigenous and qualitative methodologies, I have engaged in research that explores the role of the On-Campus Friendship Centre in the experiences of Indigenous students at Grande Prairie Regional College. From my findings, I discuss the role of the On-Campus Friendship Centre, address prominent challenges within the program, and highlight wise-practices for implementing Indigenous-based support programs within post-secondary institutions across Canada.