

OUR DESCRIPTION OF SCHOLARLY ACTIVITY

Scholarly activity is an intentional, sustained process of creating, validating and transferring knowledge. Scholarly activity happens on the land, the water and in the sky, lab, field and all learning spaces; it reaches a relevant audience and engages community.

Principles

- We honour many ways of knowing.
- Scholarly work may be created and validated by those who hold many kinds of knowledge, including Indigenous, natural sciences, social sciences and the humanities.
- Scholarly activity calls on critical reflection and ethical consideration at every stage.
- Scholarship builds connections within the university and beyond.
- We differentiate between professional development (inward facing) and scholarly activity (outward facing).
- We recognize that research and scholarship exist within political systems, yet we endeavour to maintain independence and integrity

Scholarly Activity: Examples at Yukon College

All members of the college community, including faculty, staff and students, are invited and encouraged to engage in research and scholarship. We provide here some examples of activities that exemplify scholarship. These examples are in no way intended to be an exhaustive record of such activity, which is wide ranging and will only expand as areas of inquiry continue to emerge. To reflect scholarly activity as embodying the goals and values of Yukon College/Yukon University, examples listed here are linked to the directions set out in the institutional Strategic Plan (2016-2021).

Example	<p>Educators at Yukon College take learning out of the classroom by creating experiential learning opportunities in practicum placements, field schools, culture camps and learning in place across Yukon lands. Faculty may expand and support knowledge acquisition through substantive and meaningful engagement with the natural environment in a manner that integrates Indigenous ways of knowing.</p> <p>Example 1: Engaging a community member to communicate about enhanced opportunities in the Fisheries Field Assistant Program at a heritage or active fish camp. Learning outcomes to include aspects of TEK, possibly Dooli using indigenous learning models delivered via community members</p> <p>Example 2: Carcross Campus and the on the land program coordinator via NABE / eleV directives redesigned the ASD Science 30 curriculum to a field based immersive, 45-hour equivalent, 10 day offering. The fully credited course will run two weeks near Crag Lake and will be based in a wall tent. CTFN heritage staff, local elders, and community members will supply TEK content that supports and enhances curriculum. Course outcomes will celebrate CTFN ecological knowledge and ways of knowing. Frequent excursions into the habitat around Crag Lake will supplement instruction in the wall tent. CTFN is finds great appeal in compressed course offerings that also support wellness through heritage cognition. The course design and reformatting along with the incision of local TEK while still meeting credit and transfer requirements is a prime instance of SA.</p>
Strategic Direction	Offer exceptional student experiences; collaborate with First Nations; become a northern-focused university; engage with Yukon rural communities

Example	<p>Faculty in the Targeted initiatives for Older Workers (TIOW) program, along with a TIOW student, conducted a research project titled "Measuring the Generational Gap in Computer Literacy". The intent of this research project was to increase the knowledge and data on the digital literacy levels, barriers and needs of older adult learners. The larger goal was to improve the TIOW program design and delivery, as relates to computer literacy, and to increase the research capacity of TIOW student(s) and instructors.</p>
Strategic Direction	Offer exceptional student experiences; expand research and innovation

Example	The development of Open Education Resources (OER) (for example a new course or course materials). The OER could be developed in collaboration with other content experts/knowledge holders and/or with students; it could involve a process for gathering feedback from the OER users and modifying accordingly. In this way, Yukon College/University faculty can contribute to knowledge dissemination on a wide scale.
Strategic Direction	Offer exceptional student experiences; expand research and innovation

Example	ENGL 230- 'A Survey of First Nations Literature in English' is being redeveloped as a significantly re-designed course. The course re-design involves changes to the learning outcomes, title, course content, assessment model and delivery method, as well as built-in student supports. The course re-design is unfolding in collaboration with the current cohort of students, many of them in the YNTEP and Social Work programs, who worked on a joint project to critically reimagine the future of this elective at Yukon University. The instructor then took these recommendations to consultation with First Nations Initiatives and Teaching and Learning specialists and met with other content experts/knowledge holders through community engagement. Included is a process for analyzing and reflecting upon this collaborative approach towards re-designing such a course, resulting in an article for future publication.
Strategic Direction	Offer exceptional student experiences; collaborate with First Nations; become a northern-focused university

Example	Over several years, archaeological work has continued at the Little John Upper Tanana site. This project, which has engaged students in field research over many years, now has student researchers assisting in data analysis and recording as well as cataloguing and preservation of collected artifacts.
Strategic Direction	Offer exceptional student experiences; collaborate with First Nations: expand research and innovation; become a northern-focused university

Example	Collecting data from Elders, land users, and community members via mapping interviews to spatially represent their Traditional Knowledge (TK) and integrate it in a database. This allows the inclusion and use of TK into spatial analysis alongside scientific knowledge. This approach provides researchers with data that is currently unavailable to them and communities with a different way of preserving and passing on TK. In these projects, communities play an active part at all stages of the projects which also contribute to capacity building and reinforce a positive relationship with researchers.
Strategic Direction	Collaborate with First Nations; expand research and innovation; engage with Yukon rural communities; become a northern-focused university

Example	To build Indigenous knowledge and culturally competent principles into the curriculum, faculty of the Practical Nurse and Health Care Assistant programs brought in two of the Elders on Campus into redesign of the module on nutrition and feeding in the programs. In this way, they collaborated to integrate First Nation tradition and experience into the curriculum. One Elder who is also a graduate of the HCA program then participated in the lab as students learned new content and perspective. Impact of the approach was measured with student survey after the event and will be shared through a presentation at a nurse education conference.
Strategic Direction	Offer exceptional student experiences; collaborate with First Nations; become a northern-focused university

Example	<p>Several science faculty research projects conducted in collaboration with student research assistants have tracked the impact of humans on Yukon ecological systems. Examples are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • collection and analysis of bird food sources to track levels of contamination by pharmaceuticals • measurement of climate mediated alterations in the growth patterns of trees in Yukon forests. <p>Findings of these initiatives add to shared knowledge through public presentation and peer-reviewed journals, and a student researcher’s doctoral thesis.</p>
Strategic Direction	Offer exceptional student experiences; expand research and innovation; become a northern-focused university

Example	<p>Bachelor of Social Work Instructors, in partnership with faculty at Ryerson University, are studying how social work is practiced in the small and remote communities of Canada’s north by interviewing social workers practicing across Yukon. This project builds upon a smaller pilot research project where a small group of social workers practicing in Whitehorse were interviewed. Between the smaller pilot project and the larger research project, seven social work students have been employed as research assistants.</p> <p>https://www.yukoncollege.yk.ca/news/201801/yukon-college-and-ryerson-university-partner-study-northern-social-work-practice)</p>
Strategic Direction	Engage with Yukon rural communities; expand research and innovation; become a northern-focused university

Example	<p>Scholarly activity that expresses concepts and ideas through culturally rooted artistic media can honour traditional knowledge, record existing ways of knowing, or revolutionize the arts as media of expression relevant to one’s discipline or field of study. As an example, a faculty member of the Indigenous Governance Degree program created a life-size pink moose that blends research about Umbrella Final Agreement with unique artistic expression. The artist/instructor invited members of the public and students to join in creation of the piece which ultimately was part of an exhibit at the Yukon Arts Centre.</p>
Strategic Direction	Collaborate with First Nations, expand research and innovation

Example	<p>A School of Visual Arts (SOVA) faculty member explored the historical roots of the “Octopus Bag”, made by indigenous Canadian artisans, tracing its origins to the beadwork of French religious orders. This work involved collaboration with museum collections in other areas of Canada where relevant artifacts are held. He shared his findings in media interviews</p> <p>Another SOVA instructor examined the historical record of imprisonment and execution of accused witches in the European settlers of the Americas; this resulted in a video blending 4D art and research data.</p>
Strategic Direction	Collaborate with First Nations; expand research and innovation; become a northern-focused university

Example	The YRC and FNI are collaborating on a project that examines the inclusion of land and water in the research ethics process, as part of our commitment to indigenization and to reflect leadership in our partnerships with Yukon First Nations. The project examines the potential steps necessary to embed the concepts of respecting the land and the water, as much as we do people and animals, in a holistic ethical review reflective of Yukon First Nations worldviews. We conduct an in-depth look at implications and benefits from the perspective of our college ethics process, and from an Indigenous perspective through interviews with Elders and PACFNI. We examine what impact the inclusion of these values will have on our existing ethics process, including an examination of the Tri-Council Policy Statement-2, to see where and how Yukon Indigenous perspectives have been and can be implemented. Preliminary results were shared in a position paper and at a roundtable in Ottawa, and final project results will be presented to several groups at YC, and in an updated position paper to be shared with the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.
Strategic Direction	Collaborate with First Nations; expand research and innovation

Example	First Nation led community campus based scholarly activity: Traditional Knowledge. In conjunction with Na-cho Nyak Dun citizens, the Mayo Campus will coordinate a hide tanning program that is meant to preserve traditional ecological knowledge, holistically engage elders and students in the activity all within the context of changing social and environmental dynamics. Stories and research will be captured throughout the process and compiled in documentation / reports / media that will be wholly owned by the First Nation and distributed to the College, CYFN, and the funder. OCAP and REB principles will be followed
Strategic Direction	Offer exceptional student experiences; collaborate with First Nations; become a northern-focused university; engage with Yukon rural communities

Example	<p>Developing a method of data collection to obtain additional sets of data used in our permafrost research. For example, our permafrost scientists and researchers used to collect permafrost data by drilling boreholes and collecting samples. This method only gives precise but very local information about permafrost characteristics. For their projects, they needed to acquire data for a larger portion of the site.</p> <p>This activity involved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • applying knowledge by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ researching the literature for methods available and evaluating which is the most appropriate for our purpose ○ getting trained and acquiring the proper skills to use the chosen equipment ○ surveying the sites with the new method and collecting data • creating knowledge by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ analysing and interpreting the collected data for sites that had never been survey in this manner • validating and transferring knowledge by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ publishing the results in reports or scientific paper
Strategic Direction	Expand research and innovation; become a northern-focused university

Example	<p>The technical world normally views themselves as designers, builders and crafters rather than scholars, but many examples of scholarly activity can be found in vocational education. Some are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applying critical analysis to the role of a journeyman in society. • A carpenter selecting culturally appropriate species of wood for a structure. • Student involvement in the design and construction of labs and displays to encourage lifelong learning. <p>Tradespeople and technicians simply refer to the process as “building a better mousetrap”.</p>
Strategic Direction	Offer exceptional student experiences; expand research and innovation; become a northern focused university

Example	<p>Making research results available to the community. For example, we recently created an atlas of permafrost and hazard maps to make the final products of several years of research at YRC available to everyone. We were able to do this by collaborating and hiring students, providing learning opportunities for them.</p> <p><u>Community Approach:</u> The maps presented in this atlas were developed by researchers in partnership with communities. Community members and Elders were involved in meetings and workshops where they provided valuable input for the research and greatly contributed to the work in the field. The field work was conducted with field assistants from the communities which ensured respect of the land, culture and traditions. These projects helped raise awareness of climate change and contributed to build capacity. yukoncollege.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=e034cb44769d430baf88f434bd1e0aa7</p> <p>This activity involved:</p> <p>Learning to create knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Providing the proper training for the students to create the atlas and enhancing their knowledge of the projects in question ● Transferring knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Making knowledge available in an easy and interactive way that the general public can understand. The goal being that the results can be further used by others and generate new knowledge.
Strategic Direction	Collaborate with First Nations; expand research and innovation; engage with Yukon rural communities; become a northern-focused university

Example	<p>GEOG 250, Introduction to GIS, offers the students a chance to apply knowledge gained in lectures and lab through a term project that make them work as true GIS specialists. It gives them a very practical experience and a good understanding of what is waiting for them in their future work place should they decide to work in this discipline. The students are provided with a topic and a research question; their work involves downloading relevant datasets, organizing them into a GIS database, developing an appropriate methodology, running the analyses, and finally interpreting and presenting the results to peers.</p>
Strategic Direction	Offer exceptional student experiences

Example	Community campus based scholarly activity: Climate Change. The Teslin Campus developed a locally offered but Yukon adaptable Essential Skills curriculum: Traditional Knowledge & Scientific Approaches to Climate Change. This 15-week course was designed by a campus staff member who is a TTC citizen, who saw an opportunity and need to support greater awareness of climate change from YFN and Western perspectives in relation to heritage, TEK, western scientific methodology, and community planning. The course was successfully delivered in Teslin by the local campus. Guest speakers from YRC, TTC, and several levels of government supported direction instruction and experiential on the land research and exploration. The course design, indigenous engagement, and research exploration speaks directly to SA.
Strategic Direction	Offer exceptional student experiences; collaborate with First Nations; become a northern-focused university; engage with Yukon rural communities

Example	<p>Editing and critiquing. <i>The Northern Review</i>, the multidisciplinary arts/social sciences and humanities journal published since 1988, relies on knowledge holders both within and beyond the academy to referee its original-research articles. This is the traditional peer-review in action. The <i>Review</i>, by design, offers an outlet for the scholarly production of northerners and the northern studies community. Scholarship is manifested in the pages of the <i>Review</i> in the form of book reviews and notes that can include conference reports or calls for collaboration.</p> <p>Elsewhere in the academy, journal editing (the selection, review, improvement, preparation, and publication of articles that offer new knowledge to readers) is considered “service” rather than scholarship. Our committee discussions have shown that the kind of editorial work involving, for example, shepherding an article to publication or critiquing ideas and their presentation in a review are manifestations of the determining factor in scholarship: the consideration and testing of ideas and their expression. Collecting and presenting linked documents, articles, or chapters is a form of scholarly activity.</p>
Strategic Direction	Become a northern-focused university; engage with Yukon rural communities

<p>Example</p>	<p>Writing textbooks and other fundamental works. Yukon College has long sought to ensure that graduates of its programs and the people who work here have a “core competency” in the history and cultures of Yukon First Nations and of the land claims agreements and the changes that they have wrought and are making. One response to this was the creation of HIST 140, History of Yukon First Nations and Self-Government. As is the case with so many unique courses locally rooted, there was no suitable textbook and designers and instructors relied on readings selected from a variety of authors and producers.</p> <p>A textbook / handbook is in the last stages of production with a goal of being an open educational resource (OER) available to anyone who needs a well-researched, readable, reliable outline. Among the universities such a book would not be counted as a publication but rather as “service.” In the established research universities and the institutions that think like them, the tenure committees typically reject any attempt to characterize textbooks, especially those aimed at beginning students, as a valuable academic activity.</p> <p>The deliberations of this committee show that textbook writing, and related activities like encyclopedia-entry or handbook writing is scholarly and outward facing. Producing our own textbooks and “aids to navigation” works from our own knowledge rigorously evaluated contributes to the world’s knowledge of itself in all its diversity.</p>
<p>Strategic Direction</p>	<p>Become a northern-focused university; engage with Yukon rural communities; offer exceptional student experiences</p>

SAET Members:

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Fabrice Calmels, Permafrost scientist, YRC

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Project Narrative: Scholarly Activity Engagement Team (SAET)

After more than 50 years of evolution, Yukon College in the 2018-2019 year is well into transition to University status. Engagement with Alberta's Campus Alberta Quality Council (CAQC) has reinforced the college's growing commitment to research and scholarship as platforms on which the institution's future will be built.

Scholarly activity (SA) was the focus of our very successful August 2018 faculty retreat. Building on that momentum, Janet Welch, Vice President Academic and Student Services and Bronwyn Hancock, Associate Vice President, Research Development put out a call for college staff to form an engagement team focused on scholarly activity. The mandate of the team was expressed in the self-nomination form and reviewed in the initial meeting of the team:

The Engagement Team will be made up of faculty and staff from across Yukon College who will work together to develop the following:

1. A recommended definition of scholarly activity for Yukon College that reflects our college's core values and our commitment to indigenization
2. A recommended list of activities that constitute scholarly activity at Yukon College

The outputs of these two tasks will be presented to the Senior Executive Committee as recommendations.

Members of the team self-nominated, with a few members joining in as we went forward. The first meeting was led by Bronwyn Hancock and Janet Welch and focused on the intent of the team as captured in the mandate statements above. Initial timelines were established, with a report and recommendations to be submitted by the end of April 2019. A digital folder of resources on the topic had been provided by Dr. Hancock prior to the meeting.

The team met again a week later and identified the following priorities for this work:

- Terminology will be critical; we need to dwell for some time on the words we will use
- Indigenization must be the foundation on which we build
- Whose questions will we ask? What questions do faculty ask already in their work? Can we reframe our questions and search for answers as scholarly activity (SA)?
- What questions and interests are shared between disciplines? This is an opportunity to nurture multidisciplinary scholarship and research initiative!
- Our definition and vision must honor the distinct nature of what we (Yukon College/University) are and are going to be creating
- It is important for faculty, including those in trades, that the vision of SA is an addition to our culture and values, not a replacement for what is
- For many, "scholarly activity" can be more a new lens than a new activity

Through the first weeks, team members reviewed the resources to learn more about approaches in other educational institutions. Some models were judged to be helpful, often as they were recognized for accessibility and an open, broad definition. The central elements of the Boyer model were valued. The review also served to strengthen our conviction that the Yukon College definition of scholarly activity and activities related to it had to be unique and embedded in our context.

The team had the opportunity to meet with representatives of the Royal Society of Canada (RSC) and received guidance and suggestions from the disparate academics who visited. We found the key messages to be these:

- * RSC scholars provided diverse responses and advice on our best approach to this work
- * They fully supported our plan to create something unlike any other institution
- * We were strongly encouraged to write our own story, though the group's senior member advised starting with others' work

The dialogue raised these further observations and questions:

- what makes us and our vision different? First coming to mind is the value we place in Indigenous knowledge and northern identity
- can we mesh Boyer model and YC strategic goals – they align in many areas. This can help us see where scholarship and research can live and be applied in the context of our institutional values and goals
- the Boyer model has been augmented by scholarship of community engagement; a good fit for our context
- we can learn from the perspective of librarian literature
- lots of focus on communication and dissemination
- open access VS traditional publication
- SA can look at best practices and utilize a case study approach (we saw this challenge, tried this, this was the outcome)
- data collection, information science, practice around knowledge
- Red Deer guide: a broad and helpful list as an idea though we would certainly add our context; their definition doesn't resonate here
- what are our potential centres of excellence? Indigenous, climate, northern, hybrid models, range of research funding sources. These will bring scholars at all levels here in the future
- we keep what we are, but we are adding new competencies
- note transition to university plan not to have tenure: chair system increasingly common but research focus divides research and teaching
- we see good potential for partnerships between YRC research and trades in areas like adapting structures and machinery to changing permafrost

- important that we capture art, creativity, innovation in our vision
- should we engage the college community at this point? Agreement that it's a yes.

College-wide conversation

Based on the decision to bring in the college community for initial input, the group worked to develop some simple questions we could circulate to invite insight into scholarship. To leave it open to contributors to express what they value, the terms scholarship and scholarly activity were deliberately not used in the questions. The final questions that emerged were:

1. What do you do in your job or in the classroom that contributes to the creation of knowledge?
2. What do you do – or would you do – to give Yukon College students an exceptional learning experience?
3. Which activities at the college would you consider to be validated or reviewed by peers or other valued knowledge holders?

Note: the final question was worded to encompass input from those who bring First Nations knowledge and guidance; we did receive feedback that the intent of the question was not clear to some.

Flip charts with post-it notes for response were distributed, spending a few days in each area of the college, including the Yukon Research Center, CNIM and at NorthLight Innovation; one was largely dedicated to the “pit” and then trades building entrance. Ideas and comments were collated, and team members reviewed them to decipher common themes.

Themes:

- Creating innovative learning opportunities, experiential learning, learning beyond the classroom
- Indigenous knowledge, role of Elders in learning spaces
- Weave Indigenous narratives into learning and research
- Retain northern identity and knowledge
- Build knowledge and capacity for research in staff and students
- Connection:
 - staff to learners (small class size, one on one time)
 - between learners (camping trips, on the land together, social opportunities)
 - between faculty
 - students to institution (participant in governance)
 - to community (enhanced student placements, networking)
 - to professional groups our students will enter

Indigenous Engagement Team Dialogue

During the flip chart information gathering period, SAET also met with the Indigenization Engagement Team in November to share and to learn from their experiences. The main things we left with were:

- Learn from existing documents and protocols, particularly around engaging Indigenous peoples in research/scholarly activity
- The Indigenous team found in their journey to define Indigenization that a description was a more meaningful outcome than a definition
- Consider alternate ways to capture the concept, e.g. visual like the Indigenous team's river journey
- Importance of including all college staff in the conversation and ultimate vision (not just those in academic focused roles)

Framing the Description and Examples

The next months were spent in deciding on the core themes and how we would frame them. A few ideas that captured us initially then proved a difficult fit for the concepts we wanted to capture. Frameworks we explored included Boyer; input→ manipulation→ output; and learning to create, creating, validating, and transfer of knowledge.

Eager to create a framework that is inclusive and enabling, we adopted the Indigenous Engagement Team's advice to create a description rather than definition.

The team set aside a full afternoon in early March to draft our description. Each member there wrote a draft which we then explored together to identify themes. These were then integrated into the draft description of scholarly activity at Yukon College/University.

The work in the following weeks included sharing of the description for feedback and assembling a list of examples of scholarly activity that have occurred here or illustrate a potential for future knowledge generation. As it is not possible to collect all possible examples and we want to avoid limiting the vision, a non-exhaustive narrative of exemplars was developed.

Refinement and debate about the final wording of the description and the accompanying principles continued over the next two months, until consensus was reached.

This documentation of our work is submitted to Dr. Janet Welch and Dr Bronwyn Hancock on May 8, 2019.

Yukon College Scholarly Activity Engagement Team

May 2019