

En'owkin students and staff take in a special behind-the-scenes tour of Royal BC Museum's ethnology department as well as the museum's First Peoples' and Natural History exhibits. The group also toured the Parliament Buildings.



PCC hosts En'owkin visitors

In March 2009, the PCC hosted a group of six faculty and students from the En'owkin Centre in Penticton. The group spent two full days in the Capital region: one at UVic, and the other on special tours of the Legislature and Royal BC Museum.

En'owkin is a First Nations education centre located on the Penticton Indian Band reserve in the South Okanagan. The idea of En'owkin and PCC staff collaborating on this visit arose from discussions held there during a PCC community visit to the region in October 2008. It was pointed out that First Nations students experience cultural barriers that prevent many from proceeding from a regional education centre to a more urban one; a PCC-supported visit might help lower those barriers.

The visiting students were adults enrolled in a UVic/En'owkin program called Foundations in Indigenous Fine Arts. (The timing of the visit was especially appropriate, as in 2009 UVic and En'owkin celebrate their 20th anniversary of educational affiliation.) The UVic portion of their itinerary was organized through the Cultural Management office of the Division of Continuing Studies, and included meetings, tours and classes in the areas of Visual Arts and Creative Writing.

The next day, the En'owkin visitors and PCC staff enjoyed a "behind the scenes" tour of some of the First Nations holdings of the Royal BC Museum, followed by guided tours of the Legislature and the Museum's First Peoples' Gallery.

"As we travelled back to Penticton and discussed the trip, it was apparent how impressed the students at En'owkin Centre were with the whole trip to Victoria," wrote Karen Olson, Creative Writing department head. "For some, this visit confirmed their decision to attend the University of Victoria. For others, they now have some idea of what is offered by the university and the city.

"Thank you so much for the hospitality extended to us and for being such a great tour guide. We had a great time and hope that this will be the first of many visits by EC students to Victoria."

