

UBC Social Ecological Economic Development Studies (SEEDS) Sustainability Program

Student Research Report

Indigenous Community Perspectives on UBC Night Time Events

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University of British Columbia

PLAN 522

Themes: Community, Wellbeing

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Executive Summary

This report examines Indigenous community perspectives on the Arts & Culture District at UBC and on night time campus events. While there is a lack of academic literature on the topic, students from minority and non-dominant backgrounds are susceptible to negative experiences in higher education systems.

A mixed-methods approach was utilized for this engagement, which took place in the First Nations House of Learning. An Indigenous medicine wheel was included in order to incorporate Indigenous epistemology as a method of welcoming and acknowledging our Aboriginal participants in a respectful way.

The research uncovered a recognizable cohort of young students who live very close to campus and identify as Indigenous women. A majority of the participants were not familiar with the UBC Arts & Culture district, though some had attended events. Significant barriers for attending Arts & Culture events revolved around cost, content and inclusivity. Suggestions from participants for future events almost exclusively included Indigenous pop-culture and Indigenous arts-related content. If UBC wishes to host events that appeal to the Indigenous community, strong considerations should be given to the inclusion of Indigenous artists and cultural celebrations. This will provide an opportunity for an inclusive event that centralizes Indigeneity at UBC while still welcoming the broader UBC population to experience the strong cultural identity of First Nations Peoples.

Research Questions

1. Does the Indigenous community at UBC attend Arts & Culture District events?
2. Are there any barriers or challenges for the Indigenous community at UBC in attending night time events on campus?
3. What type of events would the Indigenous community attend at UBC?

Literature Review

There is a definite lack of academic literature that examines how Indigenous populations on University campuses interact with night time events that are offered on campus. We have identified this as a significant gap and recommend further studies into this subject. During our research we determined four main factors that support the need to examine lack of engagement in campus nightlife events with respect to Indigenous community members. These factors include negative experiences when dealing with higher education systems, proven links between exposure to culture and positive outcomes in Indigenous youth, and the importance of representation and physical space.

The negative experiences in higher education systems of students from minority and non-dominant backgrounds are associated with subtle and overt racism, and the conflicts that exist between Indigenous and Western cultural values (Sonn *et al.*, 2000). The lack of support provided by higher education institutions for those triggered by course content can compound the negative aspect of these experiences. One of the ways that higher education institutions

can counter this is by increasing the exposure to their own culture experienced by students from non-dominant backgrounds, this can also increase academic outcomes for these students. According to Wexler (2009), students from non-dominant backgrounds are “more likely to thrive if they relate to values that supersede family and self and that have historical continuity, commanding respect from others who have lived before and will live after them” (p. 270). This should come as no surprise as it is now part of the general discourse that representation matters for youth and adults alike, and this is no different in higher education, nightlife, or arts and culture events (Kana’iaupuni *et al.*, 2017). The final consideration when thinking of the experiences of people from non-dominant backgrounds with higher education institutions is that of the physical space itself. We must always remember and consider that institutions such as Universities, museums, and opera houses are colonial in nature and can therefore exclude some portions of the population from accessing them (Minthorn & Marsh, 2016). This is based on both the history associated with those institutions and how those spaces are physically designed.

Methodology

Our two groups were initially tasked with different projects. Group 1 was assigned to the UBC Arts & Culture District research initiative which aimed to explore how the Indigenous community at UBC was currently engaging with the District. Group 2 undertook a research question directed from the Nightlife Events, researching what kinds of Indigenous-focused events the Indigenous community at UBC would like to see. In comparing each of the research proposals, both groups realized we had developed nearly identical plans in engaging the UBC Indigenous community. In order to not overwhelm, confuse, or exhaust our targeted demographic, we decided to combine efforts in our engagement plan, presentation, and report, while making sure to address both research topics in the process.

Our engagement strategy used a mixed-methods approach and included an intercept table along with surveys at the weekly Lunch and Learn in Sty-Wet-Tan, the Great Hall, of the First Nations House of Learning. The lunches are organized by the First Nations House of Learning but hosted by different programs, clubs, or organizations each week. Members of our group, having been to the lunches in the past, knew it would be the best option for accessing Indigenous community members at UBC as we could ‘piggyback’ off of a free lunch, which is one of the most effective methods to encourage people to participate.

Our team set up two tables. The first included a large map of the City of Vancouver and copies of the survey. The other table had two engagement boards, each representing a separate research question. Our engagement strategy involved four steps:

1. Participants were asked to place a star on the map to identify where they were commuting from.
2. Participants were asked to fill out a survey (see Appendix 1), either in paper form or on an Ipad. The survey asked basic demographic questions (age, gender, role at UBC) and our main research questions.
3. Participants moved to the engagement boards and answered the corresponding questions on sticky notes. The questions on the boards were:
 - A) Are there any barriers/challenges in attending Arts and Culture District events at UBC?

- B) What kind of Indigenous-focused event would you like to see on campus?
4. Invitation for remuneration; participants were encouraged to take a donut and enter in the draw for one of the two \$50 gift cards.

To comply with UBC Ethics Procedures, our group members explained the scope of the project to participants and asked for their oral consent while assuring anonymity in the project. We also had consent forms (see Appendix 2) that participants were welcome to take with them for their personal records.

One of our group members asked the organizers of the Lunch and Learn if we could step on stage to announce our presence and to briefly describe the research projects. This proved to be effective as we had a wave of participants following the presentation of the host organization. Over the two and a half hour engagement session we experienced strong contributions from participants.

Our tables were also deliberately 'attractive.' We used a brightly coloured blanket to lay over the table with the engagement boards. On the boards themselves, we had some bright colours reading "Ask me about the donuts!" (we supplied donuts to encourage people to participate) as well as two eye-catching medicine wheels in the centre of each board (see photos in Appendix 3).

Purpose of the Medicine Wheel

We wanted to use the medicine wheel (see Figure 1) as a model for our project for two reasons. Our first purpose was to use aspects of it to assist in the coding of answers we received by helping the, 'coder quickly distinguish codes from each other' (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012, p. 56). Because the two key questions were, "informed by the four quadrants of the medicine wheel" (Chilisa, 2012, p. 216), our intention was to categorize the answers received and place them within 1 of 4 different labelled sections of our medicine wheel model representing the four parts of being. We did this because according to teachings of the medicine wheel, "we have four aspects to our nature: the physical, the mental, the emotional, and the spiritual" (Lane Jr, Brown, Bopp, & Bopp, 2012, p. 12). The second reason for using the medicine wheel was to incorporate Indigenous epistemology as a method of welcoming and acknowledging our Aboriginal participants in a respectful way. The medicine wheel demonstrates, "many different ways in which all things are interconnected. Beyond that, it shows not only things that are, but also things that could be" (p. 32).

At the end of the event, what we discovered was responses were for the most part specific and could be placed within one part of the medicine wheel. However, we also found most answers often crossed over to more than one quadrant of the medicine wheel simultaneously. As a result, we came to the conclusion that we would respect the integrity of the responses and leave them where they were placed without rearranging them. We believe, "it is vital that Indigenous peoples have direct input into developing and defining research practices and projects related to them" (Liamputtong, 2010, p. 42). In this project, we were grateful our participants led the way and informed our group in ways we could not have anticipated. Their answers and presence were very much alive and complete as the living teachings of the medicine wheel.

Figure 1. Medicine Wheel



Wordpress.com

Findings and Data Analysis

In this section, key findings from the survey and poster boards are presented. First, the respondent demographics will be represented, followed by respondents' experience with the Arts & Culture District and their suggestions for nighttime events on campus.

The collected data was analyzed through both a qualitative and quantitative lens.

Survey Results and Analysis

38 participants responded to the survey we administered in iPad or paper form. Of these participants, 76% were students at UBC.

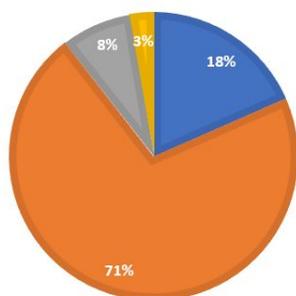
Gender Identity

71% of the participants identified as a woman.

Figure 2. Gender identity of respondents

POPULATION GENDER IDENTITY

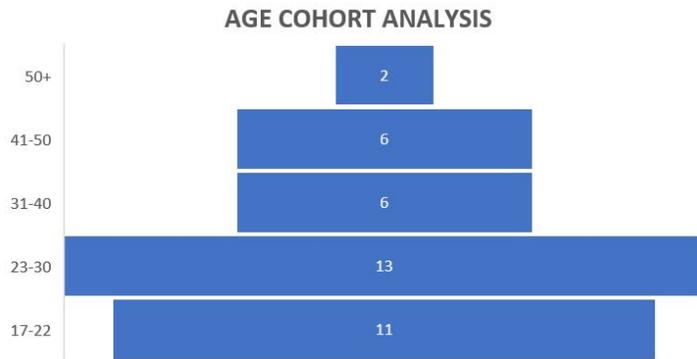
■ Man ■ Woman ■ Prefer Not to Say ■ Other



Age

63% of participants were thirty years old or younger.

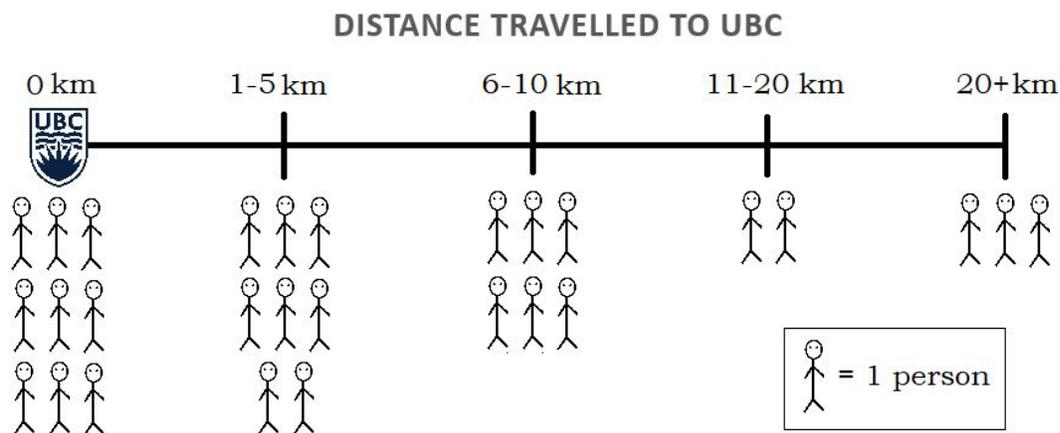
Figure 3. Age of survey respondents



Distance Travelled to UBC

More than 80% of respondents commute from anywhere west of main street, north of the Fraser River, and south of Burrard Inlet (within ten kilometers). It may be interesting to note that no participants commute from the downtown area and that nine participants live on campus.

Figure 4. Distance respondents commute to UBC



Demographic Review

Combining the survey data with the map data, there are a number of factors that illuminate a likely cohort within UBC’s Indigenous community: a young population of students who identify as women and live close to - if not on - campus.

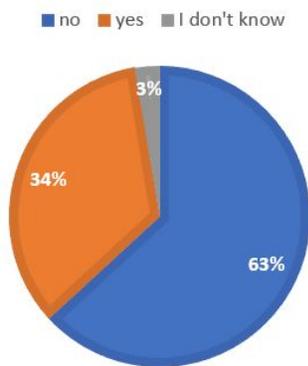
Though it is a small sample size, and may not be statistically representative of the greater UBC Indigenous population, it does provide helpful insights. The youthfulness of the participants in this engagement is consistent with Indigenous population growth across Canada. Since 2006, the Indigenous population has grown at a rate four times faster than the rest of Canada (Statistics Canada, 2017). Of course, we are aware that this engagement session was conducted in setting that would likely include higher numbers of younger people.

Engagement Boards and Analysis

The pie chart below (Chart 4) shows the percentage of respondents who have or have not attended an Arts & Culture District event. It is worth highlighting that some respondents only answered “yes” after they had one of the researchers explain to them what the Arts & Culture District included (The Museum of Anthropology (MOA), The Chan Centre for the Performing Arts, the Frederic Wood Theatre, and the School of Music). After the respondents had the venues and the type of entertainment they host explained to them, they were then able to answer the question. Overall, the results from survey question #4 suggest that the Indigenous community at UBC is not engaging with the Arts & Culture District.

Figure 5. Participants’ response to survey question #4

HAVE YOU ATTENDED AN ARTS & CULTURE DISTRICT EVENT?



For the respondents who had attended an event, the following list includes some of the events they attended:

- The Magic Flute
- UBC Theatre (Much to do About Nothing)
- Symphony
- Tig Notaro at the Chan
- Lawrence Paul Yuxwelptuan at MOA
- Marianne Nicolson at the Belkin
- Opera

To address our second research question, we asked participants to identify any barriers or challenges they may face in attending UBC Arts & Culture District events. They wrote down their answers and placed them on the engagement boards. The barriers were themed into the following categories: *cost*, *programming*, *venue*, *timing*, and *advertising and promotion*.

Table 1. Themes Related to Barriers for the Indigenous Community in Attending Arts & Culture Events and Night-time Events

THEME	BARRIERS
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Cost	Price of tickets
	Cost of child care
	Parking
Programming	Lack of Indigenous content and representation
Venue	Unwelcoming venues
Timing	Conflicts with schedule
	Events do not correspond well with bus times
Advertising and Promotion	Events are not well advertised or promoted (respondents had never heard of them)

The third research question that participants responded to asked them to get creative in suggesting events that they would like to see at UBC. This was the question that got our team particularly excited because of the interest and ideas shared by participants. This interest highlighted to us that there is a strong desire within the Indigenous community for inclusive events.

The majority of the responses that were shared involved First Nations arts and culture. Pop-culture musicians such as the Snotty Nose Rez Kids and A Tribe Called Red were prominent. Other artistic means were suggested including Indigenous poetry nights, Coast Salish artist displays and Indigenous playwright Kevin Loring. Cultural celebrations such as pow wow, drumming, dancing and singing were all shared. An Indigenous fashion show was suggested multiple times.

Limitations

Considering the scope of the research that we wished to undertake, time was a consistent limitation throughout the process of the project. The nature of our topic required that we engage with a very specific community at UBC. At first, we planned to run a focus group in order to engage with participants on a deep and meaningful level. However, given that we only had eight weeks to complete the project, we decided that it would be more effective to survey as many participants as possible. Considering our timeline and our need to survey several people, we decided that a walk-up engagement session would be the most meaningful surveying option. We likely would have faced several logistical challenges in gathering our data and running our engagement session if not for the convenience of the weekly lunches that are hosted at the First Nations House of Learning. We were able to take advantage of this weekly gathering where we knew there would be several members of the Indigenous community at UBC in attendance. Despite the eight-week time constraint of the project, we were able to effectively gather a sufficient amount of data in order to analyze in and make recommendations.

Our second limitation was the weather. We had planned to conduct an engagement session on the same day as the UBC snow day. Assuming that most students would not be on campus that day, we predicted that we would not have had much success running an engagement session.

As a result, we re-scheduled it at the last minute to the following week. Rescheduling our engagement not only required the research team to rearrange their schedules, but it limited our data gathering to one engagement session rather than two. We were hoping to gather data from a larger sample size.

Recommendations

Overall, it is clear that if UBC and the Arts & Culture District are to appeal to the UBC Indigenous community, strong considerations should be given to the inclusion of Indigenous artists and cultural celebrations. This will provide an opportunity for an inclusive event that centralizes Indigeneity at a UBC while still welcoming the broader population of UBC to experience the strong cultural identity of First Nations Peoples.

Based off the data collected, UBC's Indigenous community has strong suggestions and ideas of what they wish to see as part of UBC's Arts and Culture District programming, and how they wish to participate in UBC nighttime events. Moving forward, it is our recommendation that the Arts and Culture District build relationships with Musqueam First Nation, UBC Indigenous partners and Indigenous staff, students and faculty on campus. To build these relationships, we suggest connecting with the following partners: Musqueam First Nation, First Nations House of Learning, First Nations Indigenous Studies and Indigenous student associations on campus. Building such relationships would allow for important discussions to take place and open doorways to expand UBC's Arts and Culture district. We also recommend that the UBC Arts and Culture District host an Aboriginal student luncheon or event at the First Nations House of Learning. Hosting a luncheon or event would allow for the UBC Arts & Culture District to inform and engage with the Indigenous community. Finally, we would recommend there be a greater presence from the Arts and Culture District in the Indigenous community through more face to face interactions, posting in the Talking Stick (the First Nations House of Learning newsletter), and through social media (Facebook). An increased presence would help inform the Indigenous community of what and when events are taking place, the price of tickets, and if there are opportunities for free tickets. The Indigenous community at UBC can be an asset moving forward if given the opportunity. As demonstrated in our findings, the Indigenous community has a lot to share and is willing to be a part of the conversation.

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Image: *Medicine Wheel*. Wordpress. Accessed from:
<https://marniej.wordpress.com/medicine-wheel/>

Appendix 1- Consent Form

Consent Form for studies titled

1. "Campus Nightlife Gap and Opportunity Analysis: Perspectives from UBC's Indigenous Community"

2. "Campus Animation: UBC Night Life Events: Perspectives from UBC's Indigenous Community"

Co-investigators: Ruby Carrico, Arden Streib, Ren Roberts, Chris Cardinal, Jenna Hildebrand, Nicole Cardinal, Phil Climie.

Institution: University of British Columbia, School of Community and Regional Planning

Purpose:

Campus Night Life Gap and Opportunity Analysis

For existing night-life events:

What would engage the audience to spend more time before or after events?

What is keeping them from doing so now?

What would compel the potential audiences to stay on campus after classes/work to attend cultural events? What's stopping them from doing so now?

Campus Animation: UBC Night Life Events

1) What would an inclusive UBC night-time event look like, across all UBC communities?

2) What would make this event uniquely UBC?

Study Procedures: Walk-up table (intercept table) at the weekly luncheons at the First Nations House of Learning. The table will involve visual elements including a map and poster boards. Participants will be asked to 'pin' where they commute from, write ideas on sticky-notes and paste them on charts, and fill out a survey on demographics and a few relevant questions[SOE1] related to nightlife events. Incentives of food and draw prizes will be offered.

Project Outcomes: The data generated by this research will be used to inform the UBC Arts and Culture District and submitted as a report to the UBC SEEDS Office

Potential Benefits: 1) Responding to obstacles keeping members of UBC's Indigenous community from attending night-time events and 2) Responding to suggestions for an inclusive UBC night-time event for UBC's Indigenous community.

Potential Risks:

This study focuses on your preferences of night activities. You do not have to answer any of the questions posed in any phase of this study. You may skip any question. If you do not wish to answer a question in a personal interview, you may simply say something like, "I'd like to skip that question."

Confidentiality:

Participants will not be identified by name in any reports of the completed study.

Remuneration/Compensation:

In order to acknowledge the time you have taken to be involved in this project, you will receive the following compensation for participation:

-Option to enter a draw for one of two \$50 gift cards

-Donuts!

Contact for information about the study:

Sara Ortiz Escalante, sara.ortizescalante@ubc.ca 778-989-5164

Contact for concerns or complaints about the study:

If you have any concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant, and/or your experiences while participating in this study, contact the Research Participant Complaint Line in the UBC Office of Research Ethics at 604-822-8598, or, if long distance e-mail to RSIL@ors.ubc.ca or call toll free 1-877-822-8598.

Consent:

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time. By signing below, you acknowledge receipt of a copy of this Consent Form, for your own records. Your signature indicates that you consent to participate in this stud. [If you want to take part but do not want to sign, just let the researcher know and you can consent by speaking.] One of the copies is for you to keep.

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Date:

[SOE1]

Appendix 2- Survey

Indigenous Perspectives on UBC Events: Survey

1. What gender do you identify with?

Man Woman Other: _____ Prefer not to say

2. How old are you?

<16 17-22 23-30 31-40 41-50 50+ Prefer not to say

3. How do you engage with UBC?

Student Faculty Staff Community Member

Other: _____

UBC Events:

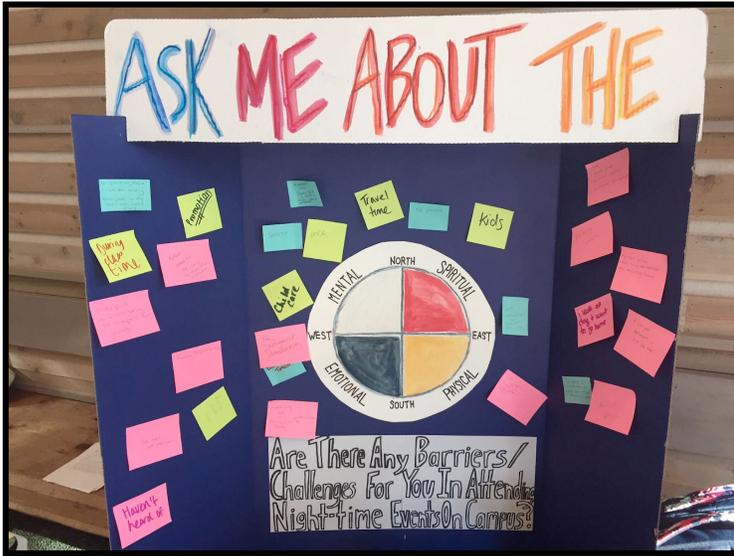
4. Have you attended a UBC Arts & Culture Event event before?

Yes No If yes, which one(s)? If no, why not?

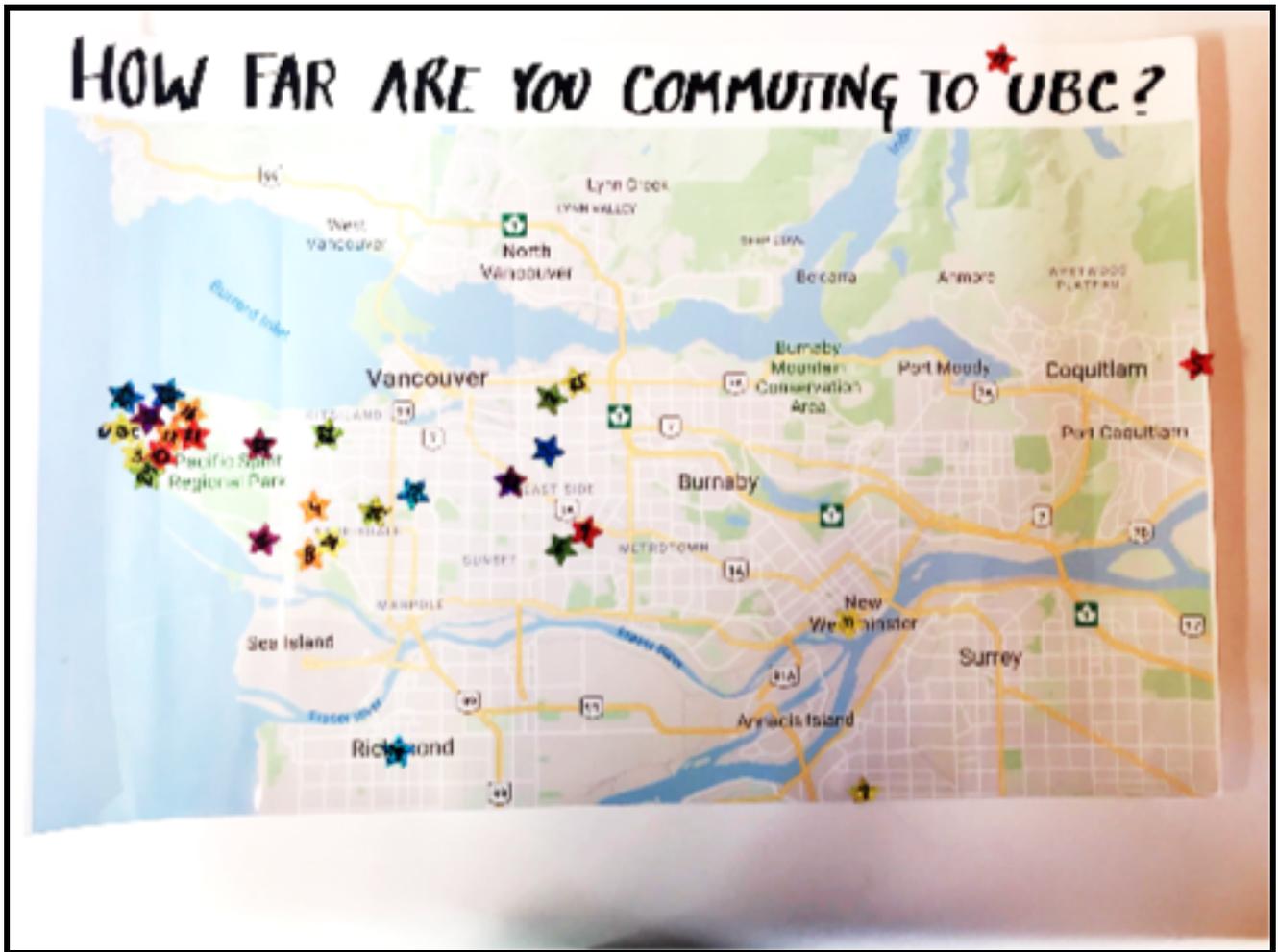
5. Are there any Indigenous artists/performers that you would like to see at a UBC event?

6. Is there anything else you would like to share about UBC events or this survey? (optional)

Appendix 3- Photos of the Intercept Table with Engagement Boards



Bristol board engagement: Are there any barriers/challenges for you in attending night time events on campus? What kind of Indigenous-focused events would you attend?



Map of Vancouver and participants' commutes to campus



Participant engagement



Research team setting up



Intercept table set-up



Participant engagement