

March 15, 2024

Dear Dr. Keith Carlson and hiring team,

As a Chilliwack local and fourth year student I am writing to express my keen interest in the student applications for research with the Peace and Reconciliation Center. I had recently shared with one of my professors Candy Ho that I have been looking to participate in research opportunities and she informed of this post. I am further excited about this opportunity because I have been looking to get more involved with the local Stó:lō communities in Chilliwack. I am passionate about promoting peace, reconciliation and bridging the gaps needed to foster positive relationships for the future.

I believe I would be a viable candidate for this position because of how passionate and eager I am. I have always appreciated and admired Indigenous culture's perspective on their relationships with the land, viewing it through the lens of stewardship. Looking ahead, I strongly believe it is imperative for us to integrate these concepts into our society and approach to life.

I also have a wealth of first hand experience gained through my tenure within the Correctional Service of Canada and Burnaby Youth Custody that has given me a profound understanding of the intergenerational impacts of colonization. Far too many Indigenous peoples have been disproportionately impacted by the systemic injustices within the criminal justice system, perpetuating cycles of trauma and incarceration. It is my fervent belief that addressing these deep-rooted issues requires a multifaceted approach that prioritizes community-based solutions, cultural revitalization, and equitable access to resources and opportunities. I am committed to leveraging my expertise, connections and dedication to contribute meaningfully towards fostering positive change and empowering Indigenous communities to heal and thrive.

Furthermore, in my recent years of studying Criminology, I have delved into numerous topics surrounding the impacts of colonization and the enduring struggles faced by Indigenous communities in Canada, a subject that deeply disappoints me. Topics that have captivated my interest include the lasting and generational repercussions of abuse, alcoholism, and the erosion of identity and culture. I am deeply invested in exploring avenues to address these pressing issues and facilitate healing within affected communities. Given the opportunity, I would be honoured and humbled to collaborate with local Indigenous communities, fostering genuine connections and working towards shared goals peace and reconciliation.

Thank you for considering my application. I am enthusiastic about the prospect of joining the Peace and Reconciliation Center to support Indigenous community healing and resilience through research, analysis, and advocacy. I look forward to discussing how I can contribute to our shared objectives of authentic allyship and reconciliation. Please feel free to contact me at aleenamclean@gmail.com or 778-230-4952 to discuss further.

Warm regards,

Aleena McLean