



IMPACT

FALL 2023

YOUR GIFTS IN ACTION



Royal Roads
UNIVERSITY



ROYAL ROADS ACKNOWLEDGES THE CAMPUS IS LOCATED ON THE TRADITIONAL LANDS OF THE LEKWUNGEN-SPEAKING PEOPLES, THE SONGHEES AND ESQUIMALT NATIONS.

We are all here for the students

I am honoured to be reappointed for a second term as President and Vice-Chancellor at Canada's University for Changemakers. This is the place I want to be. I am passionate about Royal Roads and our commitment to providing students with skills that they need to thrive in an ever-changing world.

When I reflect on my last term, the launch of our new 25-year strategic vision, creation of a bold and ambitious climate action plan, and starting the construction of a new West Shore campus in Langford stand out as highlights.

During the next five years we will continue to realize our vision of inspiring people with the courage to transform the world. We'll do this through strategic investments in talent and research; student success and experiential learning; further developing campus spaces; and deepening relationships with the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations. This is a transformative time for Royal Roads.

I am delighted to share the following stories of impact that support student changemakers around the globe. These stories (and your support) are what make Royal Roads so special. Thank you for all that you do!

Sincerely,

Philip Steenkamp, PhD
President and Vice-Chancellor
Royal Roads University

Doing academia, differently

Dr. Erynne Gilpin was drawn to her position at Royal Roads University (RRU) after hearing about a unique program for emerging scholars.

Gilpin is one of four members of the recently formed Emerging Indigenous Scholars Circle — a group that provides faculty with culturally-relevant mentorship and community.

“Even the concept of a circle is something that’s embedded within relationship and the idea of mentorship and coaching,” says Gilpin. “I’m really drawn to RRU as a global community and how that fits into my own values and goals, which are reflected in my research.”

Gilpin explains the novelty of this unabridged support comes from experiences in academic institutions where Indigenous faculty take on additional service work — defend Indigenous ways of knowing, provide relational and cultural care, navigate colonial infrastructures and values — on top of their full workload, leading to burnout.

With supports in place, Gilpin works to expand curriculum and content to include critical intersectionality, decolonization, and land-based knowledge mobilization across global contexts.

Contact us to learn how you can help grow the Emerging Indigenous Scholars Circle.

“I’m really drawn to RRU as a global community and how that fits into my own values and goals.”



Dr. Erynne Gilpin,
Assistant Professor
Emerging Indigenous
Scholars Circle

George Currie, Donor and Ex-Cadet,
Royal Canadian Naval College Class of 1947



Ex-cadet honours life-changing experience

Many RRU graduates affirm that the university's tagline, Life.Changing, aptly describes their academic experience. But long before that slogan was chosen — indeed, almost 40 years before the university existed — that phrase rang true for ex-cadet George Currie.

Now, the 95-year-old Toronto resident is aiming to change a few lives himself with a \$250,000 donation to RRU that will go toward an endowed student award focused on Humanitarian and Leadership Studies.

A graduate of the Class of 1947 at the Royal Canadian Naval College, Currie went on to earn mechanical and civil engineering degrees, with a career focused on management consulting. And it all started on what is now the RRU campus, which is why he decided to make his generous contribution.

"I did it because I owe so much to Royal Roads," Currie says, noting he's hopeful the funding will help students who might not otherwise be able to afford to attend. "It was a life-changing experience for me. I was a relatively shy person, I lacked self-confidence and I was not particularly gregarious. I think the thing Royal Roads did for me, apart from providing a first-class education, was it raised my confidence level substantially."

Currie says he encourages all ex-cadets consider donating to preserve the place and the spirit that meant so much to them.

Beyond the classroom: One faculty member's ongoing contributions

When Rebecca Wilson-Mah began donating monthly toward Royal Roads' Indigenous Scholar's Grant, her inspiration came from the students she interacted with as associate professor and program head in RRU's Master of Arts in Tourism Management. Her purpose was grounded in recognizing the immense contributions students made to the university.

"The Indigenous Scholars Grant is about acknowledging and recognizing Indigenous students who are either thinking about coming to Royal Roads or who are at Royal Roads," says Wilson-Mah. "I believe an award says, 'I belong here. I am recognized for all that I bring, and all that I'm going to continue to create and advance in my community and at Royal Roads.'"

The grants offer financial support for Indigenous students and scholars at RRU for research or learning; connecting with Elders and home community members; and help with unexpected emergencies.

Contributing on an ongoing basis is important to Wilson-Mah, who has been donating for several years and says, "I don't see myself ever stopping."

She encourages RRU colleagues and alumni to make a similar commitment, noting:

"It's about supporting access to RRU's learning community and helping out students who are already here."

Dr. Rebecca Wilson-Mah,
Staff donor and associate professor
Program head, Master of Arts
in Tourism Management

"I believe an award says, 'I belong here. I am recognized for all that I bring.'"





“People are overwhelmed arriving in Canada... it’s hard to prioritize (climate change).”

Miriam Ponette, RRU Student,
Master of Arts in Climate Action Leadership

RRU student empowers newcomers to Canada with climate change mitigation program

Miriam Ponette’s job placement with Empower Me embodies a perfect combination of her desire to contribute to climate change mitigation and her passion for helping newcomers to Canada get settled in their new home.

Thanks to an RBC Community Integrated Learning Grant, Ponette, a Quebec resident and student in Royal Roads’ Master of Arts in Climate Action Leadership program, worked with BC-based Empower Me, which provides tailored programming for new residents of Canada to help them access energy efficiency information and subsidies.

She conducted a feasibility study to determine if the service, which currently operates in BC, Alberta and Seattle, could expand into Ontario.

“People are overwhelmed arriving in Canada. There’s just so much else that’s taking their attention and so many challenges that they have to focus on that it’s hard to prioritize this,” says Ponette, who notes that in her interviews with newcomers, she learned there is “a strong desire to care for the environment and contribute to collective efforts.”

The RBC Foundation-funded grant provided the mother of two young children with income while she worked with Empower Me, something the social enterprise wouldn’t have been able to do on its own. And the research Ponette did there will likely allow the organization to apply for funding for a possible Eastern expansion.



Update your contact information

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