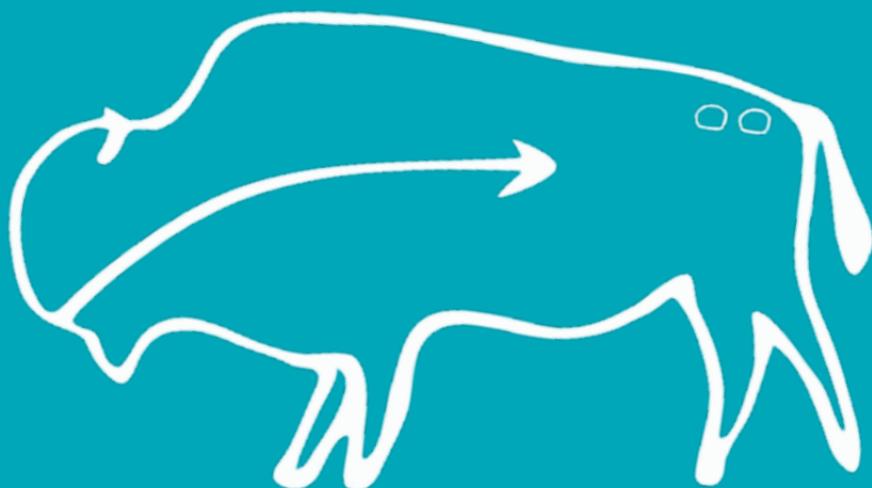


BOW VALLEY COLLEGE

**INIIKOKAAN
(BUFFALO LODGE)
ABORIGINAL CENTRE**



OUR ABORIGINAL CENTRE IS THE LEARNING LODGE ...

a gathering place, an Elder's room, a large meeting room, and staff office space to provide support services for students. A place for smudge ceremonies, and knowledge sharing with Aboriginal resource people.

"This place is for students and visitors who come and go through the door. It is a place to call home, to mentor, to counsel, to mingle, to build relationships and to serve First Nations, Metis and Inuit students as they continue on their educational journey."

Roy Bearchief, Aboriginal Centre Advisory Council, 2012.

INIHKOKAAN TRANSLATES TO BUFFALO LODGE

... by the Siksikatsi Poyiksi (Blackfoot Language Speaking People known as the Kainai, the Piikani and the Siksika) this is also known as the tipi.

Since, time immemorial, our buffalo was the one animal that sustained the Siksikatsi Poyiksi or Blackfoot people. The buffalo provided the food, clothing, shelter, and tools. All culture, events, ceremonies, dances, songs, rituals, land, stories, knowledge and protocol are reflected in the Siksikatsi Poyiksi (Blackfoot language speakers) Ways of Knowing. There exists amongst a strict cultural protocol and connection to the animals and birds in their territory.

The spiritual representation of a lodge is shown here in the gathering space with cultural symbols inherent in the design.



1

The north wall panels, as well as the pillars beside the windows, are made from Cottonwood Poplar trees, while the wallpaper behind resembles a birch forest.



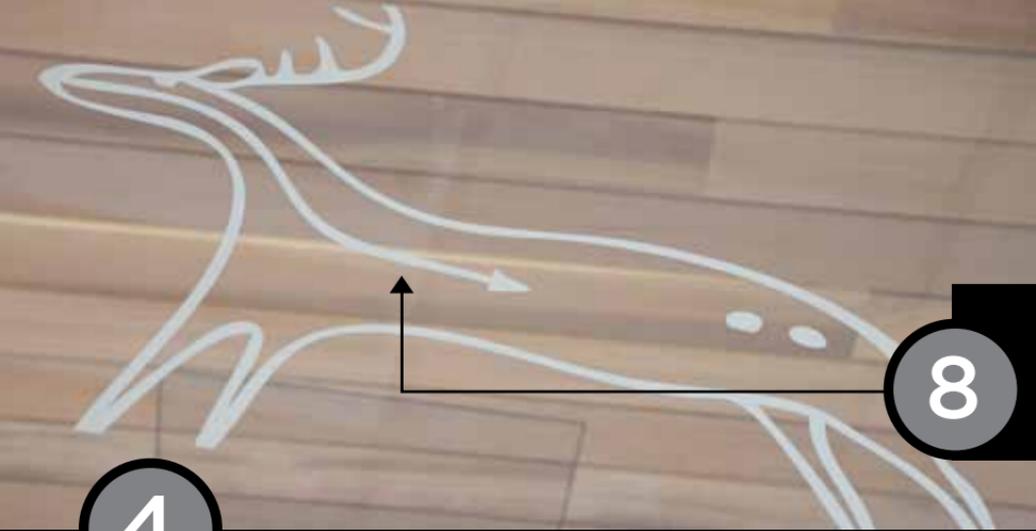
2

The ceiling features Lodgepole Pines used in tipi lodges. It also features a ventilation system to air out any smoke used in ceremonies. During traditional times, these Lodgepole Pines were covered in tanned buffalo hides.



3

A Painted Lodge had sacred symbols painted on them and these are taken directly from the earth and sky. A painted lodge is sacred cultural property and these came in a dream to the lodge owner. This person had the right to transfer the design through ceremony and strict cultural protocol.



8

4

On the window, you will see the horse, the wolf and the deer. The two dots represent the animal's kidneys. These symbols are significant, with the Round Hills representing the foothills area before it reaches the Rocky Mountains.



5

The Round Circles at the bottom are called Puff Balls which were very significant. The Puff Balls provided the fire for the next camp. A hot coal was placed in the Puff Ball and wrapped in moss and placed into a buffalo horn. This provided the next fire for life and survival. In the Blackfoot Ways of Knowing, the Story of Star Boy is significant because the Puff Ball represents him. For More Info, see Aboriginal Centre staff.

The Puff Ball also had medicinal properties.

6



7

The sharp peaks represent the mountains to the west.

Some buffalo and other animals have their life line drawn from their mouths. In the Blackfoot Ways of Knowing, all animals have a spirit and the line represents them talking to the human beings; it shows that they have a throat.



9

The Cross represents Morning Star which is the first star seen in the morning and that brings daylight to all. The Morning Star is also painted on some tipi lodges.



10

In the middle, our three Aboriginal symbols stand for the Inuit (Inuksuk); the First Nations (Eagle Feather); and the Metis (Infinity symbol).

Our floor circle shape represents many interpretations which include the following:

- 4 Directions (students from all over Canada attend BVC); North, South, East & West
- 4 Areas of the Medicine Wheel is a symbol for some First Nations peoples, who view these as areas of human potential (the emotional, the cultural, the physical and the spiritual) and there are other versions (the physical, the mental & the social)
- 4 Sacred colours (Red, Black, White, Yellow)
- 4 Stages of Life (Childhood, Adolescence, Adulthood, & Elders)
- 4 Seasons (Spring, Summer, Fall & Winter)
- 4 Human Potentialities: Cultural, Emotional, Physical & Spiritual

Today, our new buffalo is “education” ...

(echoed by Aboriginal leaders).

Education is often referred to as the new Buffalo, providing us with life and the ability to survive. Thus, the name is particularly significant for an Aboriginal Centre in a post-secondary education institution. Bow Valley College's new Aboriginal Centre has several culturally appropriate symbols on its glass windows, with the buffalo being the most prominent in the stories told by the symbols chosen.

Indigenous people's lives were dependent upon the Buffalo.

Our Metis, Inuit and First Nations people attend post-secondary education institutions and graduate to take their place in the work world, whether this is on or off the Aboriginal community. The new Aboriginal Centre

includes not only office space for the Aboriginal Centre staff, but space for Aboriginal student activities (studying, gatherings, socializing, ceremonies including smudging, etc.). The Cultural Resource Elder visits once a week to provide counselling, advising, spiritual advice and teachings. All support services are aimed at Aboriginal student success.

Bow Valley College is located on traditional Blackfoot (Siksika) territory, the 5 Treaty #7 Nations (the Siksika, the Kainai, the Piikani (the 3 Blackfoot Tribes); the Tsuu T'ina and Stoney Nakoda (the Bears paw, the Chiniki and the Wesley Band) who signed Treaty #7 in 1877. Now, our urban area also includes, the Metis Region Zone 3. The First Nations and Metis' livelihood were dependent on the availability of the



buffalo; here was the space where much learning and ways of knowing from the elderly to the younger generations took place; this space is the place for learning, ceremony and the home of Aboriginal students on campus.

A Cultural Resource Elder's Room is available for students to have sessions with our Elders. Our two Elders have post-secondary education, and are practicing ceremonialists. They provide sharing circles and guide the Smudging Ceremonies.

Our board room is called the Morning Star Boardroom which is available to all BVC departments and staff. The white cross represents the Morning Star, as stated earlier, this is the first star that we see in the morning.



Doris Caillou & Dila Provost,
Cultural Resource Elders



Bow Valley College Aboriginal Centre is a welcoming place for all who come to visit the college.

This collaboration by the Aboriginal Centre Advisory Council, Bow Valley College Expansion - GEC Architecture and the Aboriginal Centre staff is to be acknowledged.