

**February 2022**

## **TEACHING CLIMATE ACTION LEADERSHIP**

Submission to: The International Educator

*"Political barriers are the most critical challenge to successful climate action. [Pearson College UWC is uniquely positioned](#) to break down these by bringing together passionate young leaders from around the world."*

*[Andrew Weaver](#), IPCC Author, Former Canada Research Chair in Climate Modelling and Analysis, University of Victoria (Canada)*

*By Craig Davis, Pearson College UWC, Head of School*

Around the world post-secondary institutions are creating and implementing Climate Change and Climate Adaptation curricula to seize the urgency of moment. By meeting the demand of students seeking positive approaches to mitigating climate change, universities and colleges are enabling good intentions to become actions.

At Pearson College UWC, our commitment to sustainability is baked into the United World College mission and we are proud that many of our international [alumni](#) worldwide are acting on this principle in a variety of ways and across community, business, government and non-profit or advocacy sectors.

These are our inspirations for the creation and introduction this autumn\* of [the Climate Action Leadership Diploma](#) (CALD), a two-year, International Baccalaureate Career-related Program (IBCP) to be offered at Pearson for the first time. In fact, this may be one of the first such full programs to be offered to pre-university students aged 16 to 19 anywhere.

Why are we introducing a new program stream? Because we know the climate crisis is the most critical global threat facing humanity today. The scale of the emergency demands we pursue solutions through many routes – as scientists, entrepreneurs and activists, as leaders in technology and global health, as collaborators in policymaking, political and private sectors and as positive changemakers in resource and financial sectors.

The IBCP is a highly regarded and [widely recognized by post-secondary institutions](#) around the world as a program that allows IB schools (Pearson was one of the first schools in Canada to offer

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the IB Diploma Program) the flexibility to customize the curriculum to meet student demand and to harness the unique capabilities of specific educational institutions. In Pearson's case, a place-based approach to learning is deeply embedded as we build the CALD curriculum.

Marija Uzunova Dang, our Experiential Education Coordinator and a principal architect of the CALD initiative, put the linkages with the land and with our school's place on the traditional territory of the Sc'ianew First Nation this way. "Place-based education teaches us that many of the competencies key to solving the climate crisis are best learned in the real world context, through hands-on engagement with issues and within relationships of authentic responsibility and accountability to community.

"It's in this spirit that we aim to educate the next generation of global climate solution leaders – to invite young people into the complex and hopeful world on the Salish coast and introduce them to the work of people who drive transitions and transformations towards livable and just futures.

"The development of CALD is guided by the wisdom and research showing us that 'emplacement' - what it takes to thrive sustainably in a place - is a highly transferable skill-set and prepares its diverse student cohort for global impact inspired by the work they witnessed and took part in here."

The presence and prominence of Indigenous peoples, communities and leaders on Vancouver Island will be woven throughout the CALD curriculum to ensure that students understand and honour the accumulated environmental stewardship and knowledge gathered over millennia by Indigenous peoples around the world.

Marija is working closely with Faculty and leadership to build the program and is developing the curriculum together with recognized academic and Indigenous community environmental and climate experts and leaders. The Pearson campus is close to both the [University of Victoria](#) and [Royal Roads University](#) and less than two hours from [Vancouver Island University](#), an institution with a strong commitment to Indigenous-based teaching and learning.

CALD university-level courses are being built in partnership with RRU and VIU, which will be the core of climate action leadership studies. These will be complemented by bespoke UWC programming in leading climate action, student-selected and driven micro-credentials to develop specialized and practical skills and a two-week summer program, the Salish Sea Field School, between years one and two. CALD students will also choose two to three IB Diploma courses and participate in UWC and IB core learning.

We expect our first CALD program cohort to be modest in size with some flexibility built-in for interested and committed students to join once on campus. Virtual town halls and complementary outreach efforts have helped inform incoming students, families and [UWC National Committees](#) –

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volunteer groups that help evaluate potential UWC students in their respective countries -- about what to expect. We have also reached out to universities and other post-secondaries around the world to ensure they fully understand the demanding CALD program.

Students will develop a sophisticated set of leadership skills linked to a [Climate Action Competency framework](#) developed by Royal Roads University. This is grounded in the behavioural science and literacy needed to lead a comprehensive 'change management' agenda. These outcomes will be evaluated by an Advisory Board of professionals, academics, artists, policy makers, indigenous elders and alumni who will help to steer the course towards the most effective and impactful outcomes possible.

Continuing to offer a robust and challenging IB Diploma program is important. That is not going away but the CALD pathway offers a robust, challenging and urgent program for young people who in many fields will work against climate change and its impact.

Please check on our [website](#) for CALD details and check our [social media](#) for updates.

***\*Subject to confirmation by the International Baccalaureate Organisation***

### **About Pearson College UWC**

Founded as Lester B. Pearson United World College of the Pacific (Canada) and located along Pedder Bay on the unceded territory of the Sc'ianew (Beecher Bay) First Nation.

Pearson's mission is "to make education a force to unite people, nations and cultures for peace and a sustainable future" through a two-year pre-university (equivalent to grades 12 & 13) school for up to 200 students aged 16 to 19 selected from up to 160 countries and across Canada offering the International Baccalauréat Diploma Program. This year, about 80% attend on full or partial scholarships. Nearly 4,300 students have graduated from Pearson, including 14 who have gone on to become Rhodes Scholars.

**About Craig Davis:** Craig Davis is a long-time international educator with experience in the U.K., Canada and across Asia who is currently Head of School and Theory of Knowledge teacher at Pearson College UWC on the traditional territory of the Sc'ianew First Nation near Victoria, Canada. <https://www.linkedin.com/in/craig-davis-55631b12/>

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