



## NEWS RELEASE

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### NEW PROGRAM PREPARES NEXT GENERATION OF CLIMATE SOLUTION GLOBAL LEADERS

VICTORIA – A new partnership between three prominent island educational institutions marks Earth Day by investing in future climate action leaders to find solutions for the complex challenge of climate change.

Two recently signed Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) between pre-university school Pearson College UWC, Vancouver Island University (VIU) and Royal Roads University (RRU) formalized the collective work done to develop Pearson's new [Climate Action Leadership Diploma program](#) (CALD) intended for Canadian and global students aged 16 to 19.

The two-year CALD diploma provides students attending Pearson access to university-level courses offered in partnership with VIU and Royal Roads, as well as bespoke programming in leading climate action, incorporation of Indigenous knowledge and environmental stewardship, student-directed microcredentials and a summer field school. Through these, students will develop a sophisticated set of leadership competencies linked to the [Climate Action Competency framework](#) developed by RRU.

CALD graduates will work on lasting climate solutions based on the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#) as entrepreneurs and scientists, changemakers in the financial and resource sectors, innovators in tech and global health, and collaborators in the policymaking, private, and public sectors.

"The climate crisis is the most critical global threat facing humanity today. Around the world post-secondary institutions are creating and implementing Climate Change and Climate Adaptation curricula to seize the urgency of the moment," says Craig Davis, Pearson's President and Head of College. "CALD is the first-of-its-kind program for pre-university students with a passion for global climate action leadership and represents an innovative approach between aligned educational institutions committed to mitigating climate change."

"Royal Roads is taking a stand," says Royal Roads President and Vice-Chancellor Philip Steenkamp. "The university is going to drastically reduce its greenhouse gas emissions, incorporate climate change and climate solutions wherever we can, and equip students to become powerful climate leaders."

“We believe that a collaborative, partnership approach taps into the wisdom of all parties and has the potential to grow the capacity of everyone involved. Collaboration is also an essential component of accelerating and amplifying climate action leadership,” says Steenkamp. “Transparent and open communication will build professional connections between all project partners and lead to successful implementation and support of this diploma project.”

“Taking action to help do what we can, while there is still time is critical to VIU,” says Deborah Saucier, President of Vancouver Island University. “Today’s students are tomorrow’s climate action leaders and the experience and credit they will get in this program will equip them with the courage and confidence to meet these challenges head on.”

RRU continues its commitment to climate solutions leadership with the recent launch of its bold new [climate action plan](#) and unveiling of a [kitchen garden](#), rooted in sustainability, diversity and Indigenous practices, designed as a learning lab and sustainable food production hub for the community. The RRU campus and gardens are on the traditional Lands of the Xwsepsum and Lekwungen ancestors and families who have lived here for thousands of years. In addition to food production, the kitchen garden will give space to learn from Elders about Indigenous ways and food systems.

Located along Pedder Bay on the unceded territory of the Sc’ianew (Beecher Bay) First Nation, Pearson is one of 18 United World Colleges across the globe whose collective mission embraces education to support peace and a sustainable future. Established in 1974, more than 4,300 students, 80 per cent attending on full or partial scholarships, have graduated from Pearson, including 14 who have gone on to become Rhodes Scholars.

Guided by our [Strategic Plan](#), VIU is committed to leveraging our collective talent to address the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and reduce our carbon footprint. Whether in our teaching, research, or operations, VIU has demonstrated our impact regarding climate action and sustainability, but we recognize the potential to do more. The President’s Task Force on Climate Action and Sustainability and its working groups are engaging the VIU community in meaningful dialogue on climate action and sustainability, evaluating our current impacts, assessing risks and identifying future actions.

**Learn more:**

- [RRU Climate Action Plan](#)
- [www.pearsoncollege.ca](http://www.pearsoncollege.ca)
- [VIU Strategic Plan: People, Place, Potential](#)

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