**PROFILE**

Okimâwâtik, a proud two-spirited citizen of the Okanese First Nation, is driven by a passion for breaking barriers, fostering relationships, and building capacity among Indigenous communities, governments, academia, and industries. As an institutional entrepreneur, he navigates complex business processes while addressing community and stakeholder needs, consistently delivering exceptional results. Known for his strategic, collaborative approach—“thinking outside the box, inside the circle”—he has achieved historic milestones, including becoming the first First Nation Director in his employer’s 147-year history and the inaugural Indigenous business PhD student at the University of Calgary. His work reflects a deep commitment to amplifying Indigenous voices and leading transformative change.

**QUALIFICATIONS SUMMARY**

* Academic foundation informed by practitioner-based business experience, enriched by ongoing research integrating Indigenous epistemologies into management practices.
* Proven communication, collaboration, and learning skills, demonstrated by effectively liaising between company disciplines and communities on programs, technology, and development initiatives.
* Skilled negotiator with extensive experience drafting, implementing, and managing binding agreements.
* Decades of experience representing the hydrocarbon industry in engagements across Canada.
* Exceptional problem-solving within complex relational structures, balancing community priorities and corporate needs to minimize conflict, ensure regulatory compliance, and maintain positive relationships.

**CAREER**

**Business PhD Student** (2022 – current)

* Super SSHRC, Canada Graduate Scholar – Doctorate (ranked number six in Canada for research proposal)
* Leveraging decades of experience to amplify Indigenous voices in academia, fostering diversity and inclusion.
* Transdisciplinary guest lecturer (law, business, sciences).
* Entrepreneurship discipline but collaborates across disciplines mentoring and sharing business acumen.
* Research interests:
  + Indigenizing and Decolonizing Organizations
  + Indigenous Institutional Entrepreneurship
  + How to bridge the Indigenous Socioeconomic Divide
  + Reform(att)ing Canada’s Relationship with Indigenous Economies
  + Theory of Paradox and supporting the tensions of the Indigenous and Neoliberal economy

**Indigenous Seminar Lecturer and Teaching Assistant** (2021 – 2022)

Simon Fraser University

* Supported the Beedie School of Business and School of Sustainable Energy Engineering (SEE) in Indigenization efforts by delivering Indigenous Awareness sessions to MBA and Engineering students.
* Contributed to the Indigenous Leadership course at Beedie by teaching specific segments.
* Guest lectured in MBA courses on EDIIA (Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Indigenization, and Accessibility), Indigenous rights, awareness, and ethics.

**Director, Indigenous Collaboration | Sr. Advisor, Public and Government Affairs | Sr. Advisor, Policy & Advocacy / Data Transformation** (2014 – currently on leave)

Imperial Oil Limited |ExxonMobil | XTO Canada

* Designed and led enterprise-wide Indigenization and reconciliation initiatives.
* Transformed challenged Indigenous relationships into collaborative partnerships.
* Developed and implemented Indigenous strategies for diverse projects across Upstream, Midstream, and Downstream operations (onshore, offshore, greenfield, brownfield).
* Directed projects in reclamation, remediation, public engagement, and incident response.
* Supported company and executive leadership as an Indigenous subject matter expert.
* Represented companies externally as an authorized speaker (rare authorization).
* Established the National Indigenous Network, fostering support and connection among Indigenous employees.
* Delivered Indigenous Awareness training for staff, executives, and external stakeholders.
* Influenced policy and reconciliation efforts with government ministries and industry groups.
* Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP) Indigenous Affairs committee member.
* Acted as a lobbyist in Ontario for major pipeline replacement and installation projects.
* Co-led Canada’s largest on-Nation reclamation and remediation project.
* Canadian lead on global enterprise data transformation and stakeholder management system implementation.
* Adjudicated Indspire funding applications for Indigenous students.

**Senior Indigenous Relations Advisor** (2012 – 2014)

Devon Energy Canada – Calgary, AB

* Led consultation responsibilities for conventional assets in Alberta and British Columbia.
* Transformed Cold Lake First Nation relationship from animosity to a foundation of trust and productivity.
* Designed strategic plans to align corporate initiatives with Indigenous rightsholders’ priorities and rights.
* Delivered Devon’s Indigenous Awareness sessions to internal teams and external audiences.
* Mentored and supported Indigenous youth, Elders, educators, and colleagues.
* Represented the industry in a joint partnership, speaking alongside Paul Martin to Fort Nelson Secondary School students to launch the Martin Indigenous Educational Initiative.
* Advanced Indigenous Nation capacity-building through investment and company volunteerism focused on community-led initiatives.

**Indigenous and Stakeholder Relations Advisor | Communications Analyst** (2001 – 2011)

Alberta Energy Company | EnCana Corporation | Cenovus Energy – Calgary, AB

* Led the Canadian Plains Division, advancing meaningful consultations with Indigenous communities.
* Conducted consultations for a polymer flood enhanced oil recovery project in the Wabasca/Slave Lake region.
* Facilitated inaugural consultations under the Alberta Consultation Guidelines.
* Participated in Saskatchewan government round-table discussions on the Consultation Framework.
* Managed legal processes, including mitigations, conflict resolution, and agreement negotiations.
* Increased Indigenous awareness and corporate spending under Corporate Responsibility initiatives.
* Implemented a solar energy project at Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park.
* Developed and delivered sustainable, community-focused programs through direct investment.
* Directed e-communication strategies and employee communication plans.
* Advised executives on high-impact communications and media releases.
* Redeployed communication materials across HR, EHS, Training, IT, and other domains post-merger of Alberta Energy Company and PanCanadian into EnCana, serving as webmaster.

**EDUCATION**

**PhD Business student– Indigenous Entrepreneurship and Innovation** (expected 2026)

Haskayne School of Business, University of Calgary – Calgary, AB

**Master of Business Administration – Indigenous Leadership and Management** (2021)

Beedie School of Business, Simon Fraser University – Vancouver, BC

**Bachelor of Science – Computer Information Systems** (2000)

DeVry University – Phoenix, AZ

**VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTIONS**

**Simon Fraser University, Sustainable Energy Engineering Industry Advisory Board Member** (2023 – present)

Advising the institution on key issues / opportunities aligning with objectives of the school – Vancouver, BC

**University of Calgary Committee Member, Haskayne School of Business Decanal Search** (2022– 2023)

Indigenous and Graduate Student Association’s committee participant

**Okanese Cree Nation ᐅᐢᑳᐯᐃᐧᐢ Oskâpêwis** (2018 – present)

Citizen supporting economic development, governance, and community strategy — Fort Qu’Appelle, SK

**Elk Valley Métis ᐅᐢᑳᐯᐃᐧᐢ Oskâpêwis** (2018 – present)

Regulatory, governance, economic development, and proponent support – Fernie/Sparwood/Elkford, BC

**d.Talks Committee Member** (2020 – 2022)

Urban Anti-Marginalization/Racism committee member supporting organizational strategy – Calgary, AB

**University of Calgary Committee Member** (2020 – 2022)

Developed and supporting the campus-wide “What Does Reconciliation Mean to Me” effort – Calgary, AB

**AIDS Calgary Board Chair and Board Member** (2005 – 2009)

Re-elected to a second term and appointed Board Char, led the organization – Calgary, AB

**EDUCATION/PROJECT PARTNERSHIP**

**Okanese First Nation and University of Calgary Sustainable Energy Development Capstone Project** (2024 -2025)

Collaboration with students with my First Nation to determine viability of a sustainable energy project. Solar, wind, geothermal. Lead support on behalf of my First Nation.

**Okanese First Nation and AgriSolar and IEEE and University of Calgary** (2024 – 2025)

Pilot project to support Nation’s food independence plans to combat poverty and other health-related issues because good, nutritious food is expensive. This opportunity includes partnerships with engineers, an innovative greenhouse design and university researchers to support socioeconomic bridging on my Nation.

**School of Sustainable Energy Engineering, Simon Fraser University and Musqueam First Nation** (2022 - 2023)

Reimagining home renovations and construction on Frist Nation lands by First Nation citizens when not held to antiquated building codes/standards. An Indigenous self-determination activity that is focused on communities powering communities by harnessing, storing, and sharing green energy.

**RELEVANT EXPERIENCE**

**Teaching, mentoring, supervising and/or coaching:**

* A mentor for several Indigenous students and staff through my work and volunteerism
* Established a nation-wide, pseudo-family Indigenous Network supporting employee and contractor base within organization with guidelines on how to mentor/supervise/coach – multiple mentees
* Inaugural First Nation Director for 147-year-old company with wide-reaching influence and formal/informal supervisory/leadership responsibilities
* Indigenous subject matter expert for the organization, including, but not limited to CEO, Board, and management influence/coaching to support organizational decisions that consider Indigenous values
* Developed and deployed Métis materials for governments, community, and industry proponents

**Managing projects**

* National project oversight with billion-dollar impacts to company and country.
* Managed corporate Indigenous Consultation, Economic Development, Workforce Development and Community Relations/Investment portfolios.
* Developed company strategies (regional, asset-specific and national).
* Managed Impact Benefit Agreement implementation and supported their development / negotiations.
* Managed reconciliation efforts for a 144-year-old hydrocarbon industry.
* Key manager for largest reclamation and remediation effort on First Nation’s land in Canadian history.

**Participating in science and/or research promotion:**

* Led the creation of communication materials for Indigenous audiences (including translation to Indigenous languages) complex scientific processes like SSAGD (Solvent, Steam Assisted Gravity Drainage)
* Collaborated with research teams and Vice-President of Research facility to infuse Indigenous considerations to be a part of research when developing projects on the land

**Community outreach, volunteer work and/or civic engagement:**

* Extensive Indigenous community engagement on behalf of multiple multi-national organizations
* Extensive external public relations experience
* Emergency Response participant for emergency responses – public facing position
* CEO-level leadership of self-government/determination efforts (as a volunteer), for Elk Valley Métis
* Supporting Okanese Nation’s (my First Nation) self-determination efforts including economic development, workforce development and industrial/government relations efforts
* Guest lecturer to Simon Fraser University speaking to all engineering students and MBA students about Indigenous peoples, rights, relations, reciprocity, and reconciliation

**Chairing committees and/or organizing conferences and meetings:**

* Facilitate and deliver Indigenous Awareness sessions
* Volunteer committee member with d.Talks supporting urban anti-marginalization/racism efforts
* Frequently lead internal/external facilitation sessions with my organization
* Board member for Imperial Oil’s PRIDE Network supporting LGBTQ2S+ employees and contractors
* Chaired IIN (Imperial’s Indigenous Network) supporting Indigenous employees and contractors
* Supporting TELUS Digital Division’s internal reconciliation efforts

**Participating in departmental or institutional organizations, associations, societies and/or clubs:**

* Registered Lobbyist for pipeline with Government of Ontario on behalf of organization
* Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers Aboriginal Affairs committee member
* Multiple Indspire and in-community presentations to youth and teachers
* 11th Annual Western Indigenous Consultation and Engagement Conference Panelist
* 2021 South x Southwest Panelist alongside Consul General McCormick and Yukon Grand Chief

**AWARDS/SCHOLARSHIPS**

* 2024 Alberta Graduate Excellence Scholarship – $11,000
* 2024-2026 SSHRC Canada Graduate Scholarship – Doctorate $ 110,000
* 2023 Alberta Graduate Excellence Scholarship – $11,000
* 2023-2024 SSHRC Canada Graduate Scholarship – Doctorate - $43,750
* 2023 McDonalds Building Brighter Futures – $4,400
* 2023 Ch’nook Scholars Program – $1,000
* 2022 Alberta Graduate Excellence Scholarship – $15,000
* 2022 CIBC Building Brighter Futures – $10,000

**Peer Reviewed Publications**

* [Transforming Indigenous Higher Education: Privileging Culture, Identity and Self-Determination: A Review](https://doi.org/10.5465/amle.2024.0289) (Salmon & Elliott, 2024)

**Press/Articles**

* UCalgary News: [Paving an inclusive path: Haskayne’s first Indigenous business PhD student on a journey to build a better tomorrow](https://www.ucalgary.ca/news/paving-inclusive-path-haskaynes-first-indigenous-business-phd-student-journey-build-better-tomorrow)
* UCalgary News: [Indigenizing leadership pathways: A journey through the impactful Ch’nook Scholars program](https://www.ucalgary.ca/news/indigenizing-leadership-pathways-journey-through-impactful-chnook-scholars-program)
* The Gauntlet: [Ch’nook Scholars Program provides community and support for Indigenous Haskayne students](https://thegauntlet.ca/2024/07/15/chnook-scholars-program-provides-community-and-support-for-indigenous-haskayne-students/)

**Publications (Non-Refereed) Presentations AND gUEST lECTURES**

**Conference Presentations**

* Academy of Management: [Charting the Course for Decolonization – Feasible Future or Puzzling Paradox](https://cdmcd.co/k97rv3) (2024)
* Academy of Management: [Defining, Designing And Deploying Indigenous Research Methodologies in Management Research](https://doi.org/10.5465/AMPROC.2024.15550symposium) (2024)

**University/Academic**

* UofA Research & Innovation : Invited Guest Speaker – Conducting Energy Focused Research In Partnership with Indigenous Communities (Q4 2024)
* UBC Sauder: Invited Ch’nook Speaker – Why Indigenous Business PhD’s Business Are Critical (Q4 2024)
* UofC Law School: Law and Indigenous Economic Development (Q4 2024)
* UofC Haskayne: The Paradoxes of Indigenization and Decolonization: A Beedies School Case Study (Q3 2024)
* UofC Haskayne: An Indigenous Finance Point of View (Q2 2024)
* UofC Haskayne: Panel Participant for eMBA students on “No One Left Behind” (Q2 2024)
* UofA Business School: Presentation of Research Program to staff/faculty and Students (Q3 2023)
* UofC Haskayne: [Social License to Operate and Indigenous Engagement](https://uofc-my.sharepoint.com/:p:/g/personal/mick_elliott_ucalgary_ca/EbPvQgcDnRhDsrk9tlP_QZQBZftsZGPfJ5M54hZ228x1bQ?e=C6kD8Y) (Q4 2023)
* UofC Cummings: Healthcare Entrepreneurial Innovations with Indigenous Peoples (Q4 2023)
* UofC Haskayne: Measuring Success and Teaching Entrepreneurship from an Indigenous Worldview (Q4, 2023)
* UofC Haskayne: Entrepreneurship and AI: Finding Common Interests to Build Projects with AI (Q3 2023)
* UofC Haskayne: Social Enterprise, Licence and the Interaction with Indigenous Peoples in Canada (Q3 2023)
* UofC Haskayne: Financial Truth and Reconciliation (Q3 2023 – two sections)
* UofC Haskayne: Indigenous Rights Awareness and Impacts to Business Opportunities (Q1 2023)
* UofC: Funded project – What Does Reconciliation Mean to You? - [What does reconciliation mean to you?](https://ucalgary.ca/news/what-does-reconciliation-mean-you#:~:text=The%20%E2%80%9CWhat%20does%20reconciliation%20mean%20to%20me%3F%E2%80%9D%20project,spark%20ongoing%20conversation%20on%20the%20topic%20of%20reconciliation.)
  + UofC website - [Reconciliation video project | University of Calgary (ucalgary.ca)](https://www.ucalgary.ca/indigenous/about-ii-taapohtop/reconciliation-video-project)
  + Mick Elliott Video – <https://youtu.be/zzKi2EuwHpI>
* UofC Werklund: Funded project – [Discourses on Learning in Education (learningmetaphors.com)](https://learningmetaphors.com/)
  + Indigenous language co-author – [Blackfoot](https://learningmetaphors.com/metaphors/blackfoot/)
* SFU Sustainable Energy Engineering (SEE): Panel Participant – Decolonizing SEE’s Curriculum (Q3 2024)
* SFU Sustainable Energy Engineering (SEE): Annual Engineering Student Deployment (2022-2024, annual)
  + [Reconcili-action: Indigenous Project Contemplations for Engineering Students](https://1drv.ms/p/s!AgHm5FfB6QUwgot_fQgVkqHVhJu_qw)
* SFU Delta MBA: Stakeholder and Rightsholder Considerations and Worldviews (2022-2023, annual)
* SFU Beedie: Indigenous Awareness in Canada – [2022 Presentation.pptx](https://1drv.ms/p/s!AgHm5FfB6QUwgfcz2kbbBs1zxv4Aqg?e=GZbPzW)
* SFU Beedie: Indigenous Leadership Presentation – [2021 10 06 - eMBA Business Leadership Lecture](https://1drv.ms/p/s!AgHm5FfB6QUwge4OM5wXuMQsGXgKWg?e=War4j5)
* SFU Beedie: A Case Study in Ethical Engagement on Major Projects – 2020-2023 MBA/eMBA cohorts (annually)
  + [Indigenous Collaborations on Turtle Island – Reconcili-action Through Relationships](https://uofc-my.sharepoint.com/:p:/g/personal/mick_elliott_ucalgary_ca/EYf24tHnhLVMhOfGIms9E98B1_AwbKBts5n7ZQVkiu1rLQ?e=kQY68a)
  + Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain (TMX) Pipeline Indigenous Case Study

**Community**

* Maskwacis Cultural College (Indigenous classwork/lectures):
  + [Applying Indigenous Worldviews to Leadership](https://1drv.ms/p/s!AgHm5FfB6QUwgpJ4HV9PzPtiCnP5qQ) (Q4 2024)
  + Mass Media and Communications through Social Networks for Business ( Q1 2023)
  + Storytelling through Finance (Q3 2022)
  + Youth empowerment and motivational lecture - [2021 Ignite Your Passions.pptx](https://1drv.ms/p/s!AgHm5FfB6QUwgeRUvFYOnTLdrcfpdw?e=cQq7Ab)
  + Corporate Finance Lecture – [2021 Corporate Finance.pptx](https://1drv.ms/p/s!AgHm5FfB6QUwgeRUvFYOnTLdrcfpdw?e=7TdMYQ)
  + A Billion Dollar Indigenous business opportunity – [2021 Bioremediation and Reclamation](https://1drv.ms/p/s!AgHm5FfB6QUwgeRXGzn8iUGN0UbvNw?e=14bOy4)
* Indspire Soaring Youth Conference Workshops – How to Ignite Your Passions to find a Career *You* Love! (2017 & 2019)
* Strathcona Chamber of Commerce – Indigenous Awareness and Reconciliation (influenced land acknowledgement)
* Elk Valley Métis Nation website – [Elk Valley Métis Nation (elkvalleymetis.com)](https://elkvalleymetis.com/)
  + Presentation: Who is the Elk Valley Métis Nation? – [EVM\_Presentation.pptx](https://1drv.ms/p/s!AgHm5FfB6QUwgeZ1r5N36GVLc6PrPw?e=u3BnB3)
* Kootenay Métis website - [Kootenay Métis (kootenaymetis.com)](https://kootenaymetis.com/)
* Okanese First Nation Governance Support - [2018 Okanese.pptx](https://1drv.ms/p/s!AgHm5FfB6QUwpg4OcBGXxSin9cEL?e=NNetaZ)

**Business**

* Alberta Minister Feehan – Imperial’s Indigenous Strategic Performance (2018)
* TELUS Digital – Indigenous Relations on Turtle Island – [Indigenous Awareness.pptx](https://1drv.ms/p/s!AgHm5FfB6QUwgfYtlp2glVVypEIvcw?e=6Ndioj) (2022)
* Imperial Oil Limited / ExxonMobil / XTO – [Indigenous Relations in Canada](https://1drv.ms/b/s!AgHm5FfB6QUwtU2TKkzMc0JtQTe-?e=saI0pn) (many deployments – 2014 onwards)
* Devon Energy Canada – Aboriginal Relations in Canada (many deployments 2012-2014)