



## LETTER TO OUR COMMUNITIES June 4, 2021

The recent locating of an unmarked grave containing the remains of 215 Indigenous children at the Kamloops Indian Residential School is heartbreaking. No school should have a graveyard, and no children, parents, families, or communities should ever have to endure the horrors of forced separations intended to destroy the bonds of family, culture, faith, and community. Unfortunately, while horrifying, this discovery does not come as a surprise to Indigenous communities grappling with the operation of genocidal settler colonialism in northern North America.

As scholars of History, Classics, and Religious Studies, we know that the past is never truly behind us. This unmarked grave is stark evidence of the profound and dehumanizing injustices that shaped Canada and that continue on in various forms today. Racism, exclusion, violence, profound inequality, white supremacy, and the ongoing legacies of trauma are very much present in this country and in our communities.

We recognize that it is our responsibility as educators, as residents and citizens of Canada, and as inhabitants on Treaty Six territory to ensure that our students and our communities continue to learn about and reckon with the realities of colonialism, racism, and the residential school system. We are proud to support and learn from the work of our Indigenous faculty members and students who are leading the way in research in these areas, and we are guided in our efforts by the Calls to Action of the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#).

We also want to extend our love, support, and solidarity to those coping with renewed trauma related to these recent events. The Indian Residential Schools Crisis Line is available 24-hours a day for anyone experiencing pain or distress as a result of their Residential school experience: 1-866-925-4419. If you would like to explore ways to support the Tkemlúps te Secwépemc community, this [resource](#) offers some suggestions. A list of supports for those living in the Edmonton area is also available [here](#).

Sincerely,

Ryan Dunch, Chair  
Department of History, Classics, and Religion