

Verna J. Kirkness Education Foundation



VERNA J. KIRKNESS
EDUCATION FOUNDATION



VJKF Students at University of Ottawa

“The mission of the Verna J. Kirkness Education Foundation is to increase the number of Indigenous students graduating from pure and applied science, engineering, and mathematics programs in Canada.”

Verna J. Kirkness Education Foundation
Foundation Mission Statement



OUR HISTORY

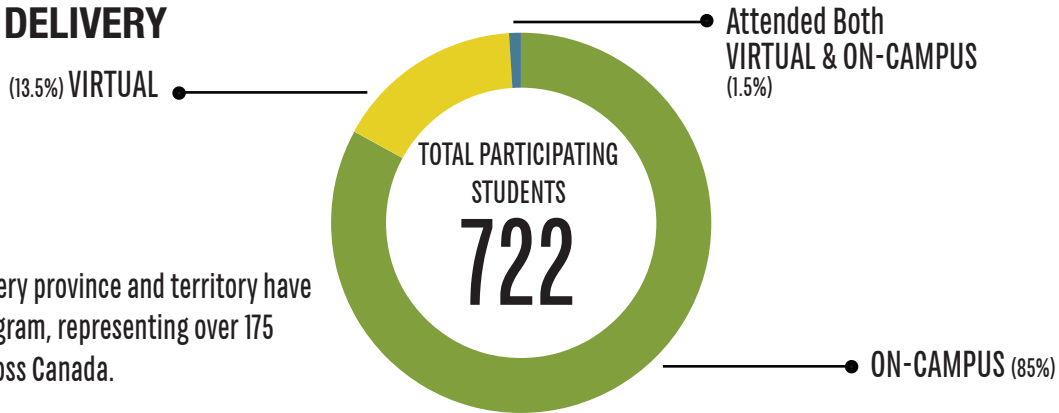
Our Foundation was originally named the Family Food Research Foundation and was founded in 2008 by Ron Woznow and Susan O'Brien. Its goal was to increase the number of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students graduating from post-secondary science programs. The first program started in 2009 as the "Be a Food Researcher for a Week," which provided an opportunity for students to spend a week on campus learning about food research. Students also learned about supports available to them if they decided to pursue post-secondary studies.

In 2010, Dr. Verna J. Kirkness, who is widely regarded as one of the leading Indigenous educators in Canada, was introduced to the Foundation. She agreed to lend her name to the Foundation, which was then renamed the Verna J. Kirkness Education Foundation.

From 2012 to 2014, the program was offered at the University of Manitoba. In 2015, a Program was added at the University of Saskatchewan and in 2016 at the University of British Columbia. In 2018, the program expanded to the University of Calgary, First Nations University of Canada and the University of Ottawa. In 2019, Programs were added at the University of Victoria and University of Alberta, bringing the number of programs to thirteen. In 2019, 130 students from across Canada attended our program and were mentored by 63 professors and research associates. We continue to build relationships with universities that have yet to hold an in-person program and look forward to being back on campus in 2023.

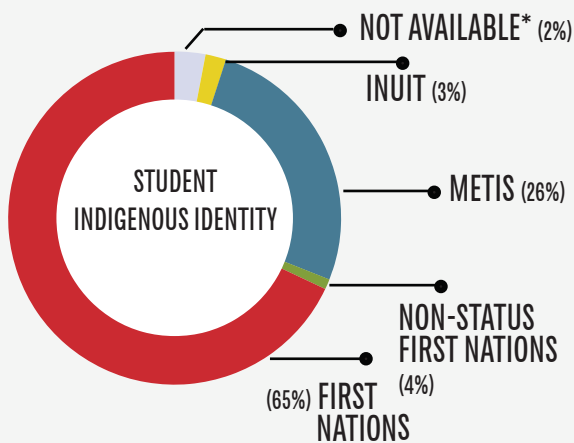
Our Program at a Glance

PROGRAM DELIVERY

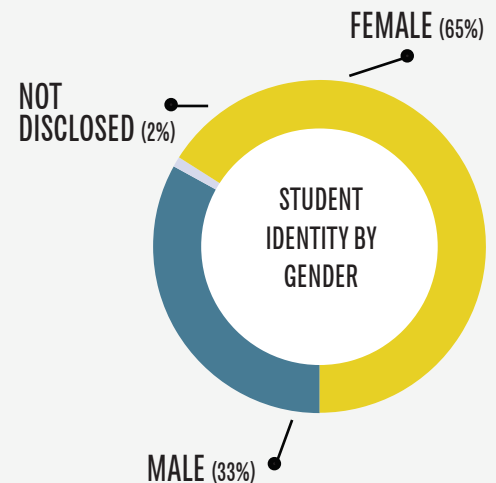
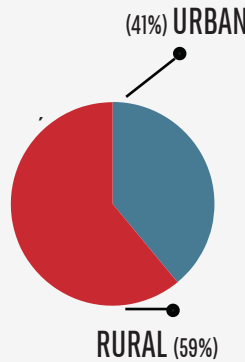


Students from every province and territory have attended our program, representing over 175 communities across Canada.

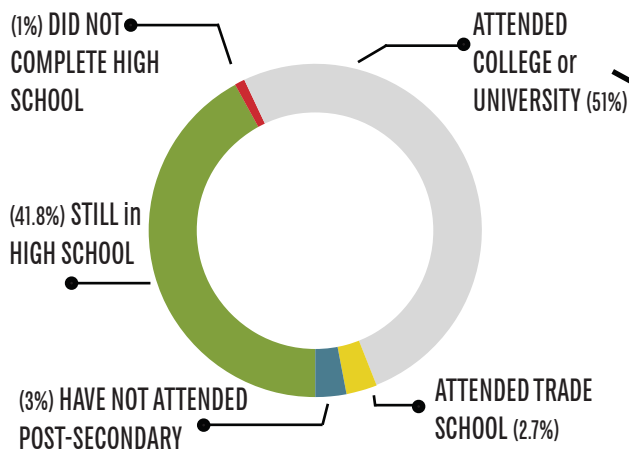
STUDENT STATISTICS



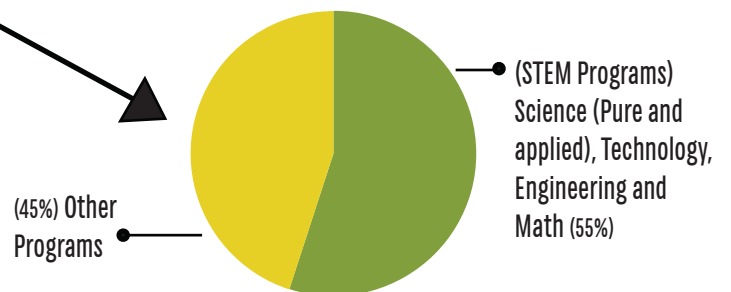
STUDENT LOCATION



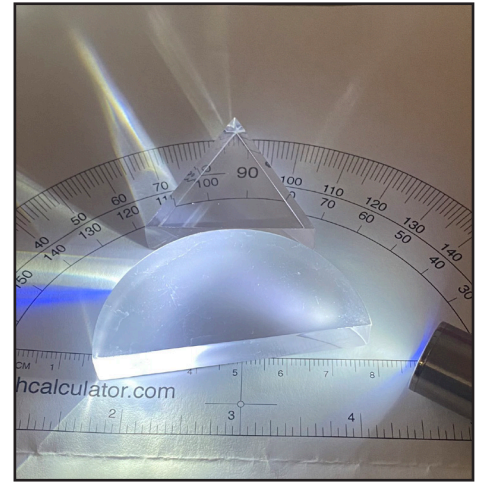
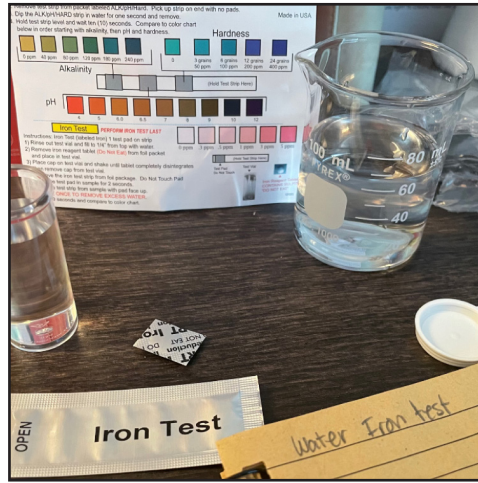
MEASURED OUTCOMES*



Programs VJKF Students Took at University or College



* In 2022, we surveyed all past participants and were able to reach 256 students for updates on their academic achievements. This reported data summary is from those students we were able to reach.



WHAT WE DO

SCIENCE • TECHNOLOGY • ENGINEERING • MATH

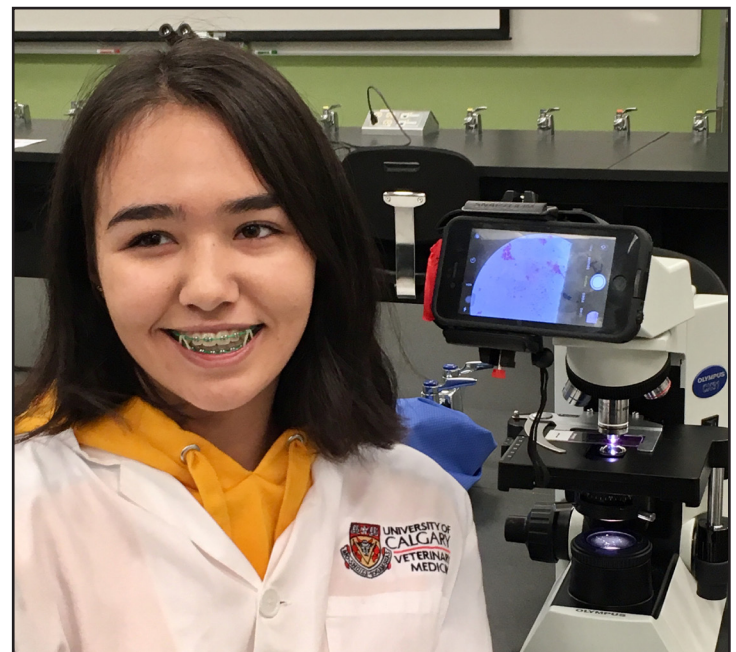
The Verna J. Kirkness Education Foundation Program addresses the under-representation of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students at Canadian universities. One of the factors contributing to this issue is the lack of academic role models for Indigenous students.

Our Foundation works to address this under-representation by offering scholarships to Indigenous High School students for them to spend a week at a Canadian university interacting and learning with professors and their teams.

During their week on-campus students have the opportunity to meet role models, learn about the support systems available to them on campus, and experience the excitement of

doing research in a university laboratory.

The VJKF Program develops motivated role models who foster the importance of graduating from high school and obtaining a postsecondary education.



VERNA J. KIRKNESS



LIFE LONG ADVOCATE FOR INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

Verna J. Kirkness is a member of the Fisher River Cree Nation in Manitoba. She is a lifelong advocate of Indigenous Education and has created many learning opportunities for Indigenous people at all levels. Her work to extend new programs, access and support services, and cultural enrichment have been the foundation on which scholars have continued to build.

Dr. Kirkness has written and edited nine books, one being her autobiography *Creating Space*, and has published numerous articles on Indigenous education in academic journals in Canada and internationally. For more than six decades, she has been a major spokesperson for Indigenous education. Her work has been recognized with numerous honours and awards.



In 1990 she was voted Canadian Educator of the Year, and in 1994, she received a National Aboriginal Achievement Award (now Indspire) for education. She is a member of the Order of Canada (1998) and the Order of Manitoba (2007). She was awarded the Queen's Jubilee Medal in 2010 and has six honorary doctorates.

**HONOURARY
BOARD CHAIR**

BOARD of DIRECTORS & STAFF



**Tyson MacGillivray,
Board of Directors,
Chair & Treasurer**

Mr. MacGillivray is a resident of Winnipeg, Manitoba. He received his BSc. from St. Francis Xavier University in 1996. Tyson is the Area 3 Superintendent of the Frontier School Division. Prior to this, he was a teacher, vice-principal and a principal in the Shamattawa Education Authority. He chairs the School Advisory Committee for the Foundation and was also instrumental in the recruitment of Program participants from Winnipeg high schools.



**Dr. Mark Whitmore, Ph.D.
Board of Directors,
Vice President**

Dr. Whitmore holds degrees in Mathematics and Physics from McMaster University. He was a faculty member at Memorial University of Newfoundland from 1977 to 2014, where he also held a variety of academic administrative positions. He moved to the University of Manitoba in 2014 for a ten-year term as Dean of Science, during which he became a strong supporter of the Verna J. Kirkness program. Following the completion of his term as Dean, he led the Faculty of Science Indigenous Achievement Initiative for three years until his retirement and move to Blind River, Ontario. He served on a number of boards of directors during his career, and has recently joined the North Shore Health Network Board of Trustees in northern Ontario.

OUR EXECUTIVE & BOARD of DIRECTORS



**John Lovell, FCPA
Board of Directors,
Member**

John Lovell, FCPA has a 40 year career providing Financial Accounting Consulting and Management predominantly to First Nation Communities in Manitoba and Northern Ontario through his own consulting firm. He has served on the National and Provincial Accounting Boards. John, after many years on the Board, as well as Finance Chair, is currently the Board Chair of Marymount Inc.

**Dr. Tim Vine,
Board of Directors,
Member**

Dr. Vine lives and works in rural Northern Ontario as a hospital C.E.O. With an undergraduate degree in economics and graduate degrees in business and political science, he has served in senior finance roles in the private, not-for-profit, municipal, and hospital sectors. Dr. Vine has served on many boards, including the University of Sudbury, and is passionate about post-secondary education. He is a member of the Finance Committee of the Foundation.



OUR EXECUTIVE & BOARD of DIRECTORS



DeDe DeRose, M.Ed., B.Ed.
Board of Directors,
Secretary

DeDe was British Columbia's first Superintendent of Aboriginal Achievement, and is a prominent advocate for Aboriginal student success. Born in Williams Lake to a Secwepemc family and as a member of the Esketemc First Nation, DeRose graduated from UBC's Indigenous Teacher's Education Program (NITEP) with a Bachelor of Education in 1981.

She also earned a Diploma in Education in 1990, and completed the UBC Ts'kel Master's Program in 1993. DeRose taught in the Cariboo Chilcotin School District for nine years, and then served as principal for various elementary schools in the Kamloops/Thompson School District for nearly two decades. In 2012, DeRose was appointed to the BC Ministry of Education as the first ever Superintendent of Aboriginal Achievement. The position was created to improve the rates of high-school graduation for Aboriginal youth, which is on average 30% lower than non-Aboriginal students.



Patrick Lauzon, BSc., APRM
Board of Directors,
Vice President

Mr. Lauzon is a resident of White Rock, British Columbia. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science Degree from UBC in 1978 and did advanced studies at Simon Fraser University. From 1981 to 2010 he held a range of positions in a number of therapeutic areas within Merck Canada. In 2001 he was appointed Manager for Corporate Affairs and Policy in BC with responsibility for liaison with the academic health research community, the business and biotechnology sector, patient and disease advocacy groups, and the BC Government.

OUR EXECUTIVE & BOARD of DIRECTORS



**Dr. Annemieke Farenhorst, Ph.D.
Board of Directors,
Member**

Dr. Annemieke Farenhorst is a Professor of Soil Science and the Associate Vice-President Research at the Univ. Manitoba. She holds a Doctorandus in Physical Geography and Soil Science from the Univ. Amsterdam and a Doctoral degree in Geography from the Univ. Toronto. Dr. Farenhorst was the Prairie NSERC Chair for Women in Science and Engineering from 2011-20, and directed the NSERC CREATE H2O program for First Nations Water and Sanitation Security from 2013-19. Previously, from 2005-14, she also led a large network to advance food security for small-scale farmers in Costa Rica, Honduras and Nicaragua. Dr. Farenhorst has been recognized for her professional contributions through a range of awards including being a 2016 WXN Canada's Most Powerful Women award winner.

**Laura Buller, B.A., B.Ed.
Board of Directors,
Member**

Laura Buller graduated in 2014 with her Bachelor of Education degree from the University of Winnipeg's Community-based Aboriginal Teacher Education Program (CATEP). She is currently a high school support teacher in the Winnipeg School Division, working in a program that builds foundational relationships with students and supports both their academic and social-emotional needs. She mentors Indigenous students enrolled in a teacher development program as they transition to post-secondary education. Through her advocacy for Indigenous students in the classroom and throughout the community, she has received awards such as the Premier's Award for Excellence in Education and Indspire's Guiding the Journey: Indigenous Educator Award as a role model.



OUR SUPPORT STAFF



Morgan Laboucan, BA Program Coordinator

For over 5 years, Morgan has been a noteworthy presence for the Verna J. Kirkness Education Foundation. Morgan attended and graduated the VJKF Program as a student in 2016 and worked as a summer student for the Foundation in following years as she was completing her studies at the University of Calgary. In 2018 Morgan joined the Board of Directors for a three year term in hopes of bringing a young, Indigenous, female voice to aid in the mission of the Verna J. Kirkness Education Foundation. Having completed her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Philosophy in 2021, Morgan was hired as the Foundation's Program Coordinator in January 2022.

Having been an on-site coordinator in previous years, Morgan brings a substantial set of skills, knowledge, and familiarity pertinent to the role as Program Coordinator.

Morgan is a proud member of the Driftpile Cree Nation and is passionate about working with Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

DID YOU KNOW?

In a recent survey sent out to our past VJKF students, we found out a few interesting facts about the 256 students who replied.

Of those students who responded and hadn't indicated they were still in high school, **98.7%** of students had completed high school, of which **87.9%** went on to attend university or college.

2022 VJKF
Student
Experiment



PROGRAM TESTIMONIALS

“Yes, my university choice will be influenced. I am now pumped about going to university and that will speed up my career path.”

—Jesse, 2010 Kirkness Scholar



VJKF Student Experiment, Exploring the World of Chemistry, The University of British Columbia

“It was an amazing experience and it really helped me realize the different aspects of science. VJKF has so much variety in the sessions they offer! [Students] should definitely look into it!”

—Taelor, 2022 Kirkness Scholar

“The Verna J Kirkness program gave me a chance to experience university life. It also gave me a chance to work in a lab that gave me hands on experience. After my experience, I have considered going into Human Nutritional Science.”

—Mickenzie, 2016 Kirkness Scholar

“This was a very fun program, teaching us so much more about our culture. We were able to attend science classes, and learn from students attending university. I would recommend attending!!”

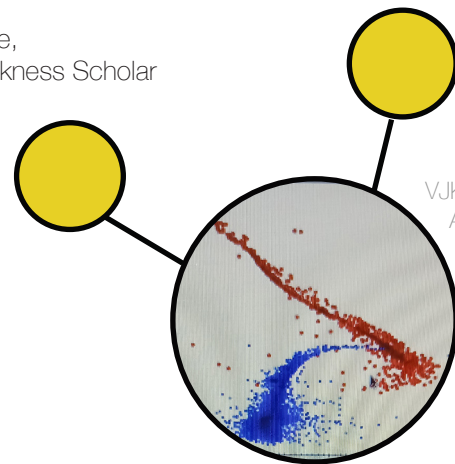
—Lanea, 2022 Kirkness Scholar



VJKF Student Experiment, Picture This—The Science of Light University of Ottawa

“During the week I learned so much about computer science and programming. My experience in the lab included, Coding, using and learning about Python, Javascript, C++ and C#, as well as setting up software called Unity with the help from our mentors, Matthew and Jon, students from UVIC. In Unity I was able to create a demo game using 3d blocks and assets that I downloaded into the Unity software.”

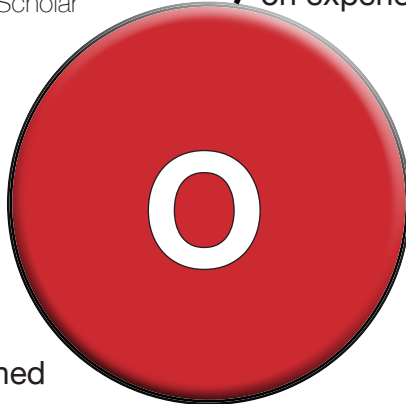
—Trinity, 2019 Kirkness Scholar



VJKF Program, Astronomy and My Place in the Universe, The University of British Columbia

“VJKF allowed me the opportunity to explore STEM in a new way. It provided a great experience for learning how indigenous cultures can find their place in the future of STEM.”

—Emily,
2022 Kirkness Scholar



“The Verna J. Kirkness program has opened my eyes to the possibilities of what and who I can become. Because of this program, I feel safe, accepted and able to go into the science and engineering fields as a Metis woman, not only to learn but to innovate and better the lives around me. If it weren't for this program I probably would never have known the vast opportunities that are out there. This was [a] life-changing opportunity that I will always be grateful for.”

—Cariona,
2019 Kirkness Scholar

“I'd definitely encourage [students] to join in and not stress too much about the labs or anything as it's very open and hands on.”

—Miracle,
2022 Kirkness Scholar

“The Verna J Kirkness Program gave me early exposure in studying Physics. During the week we learned about the different types of radioactivity and built a homemade cloud chamber. Having this experience opened my eyes about university.”

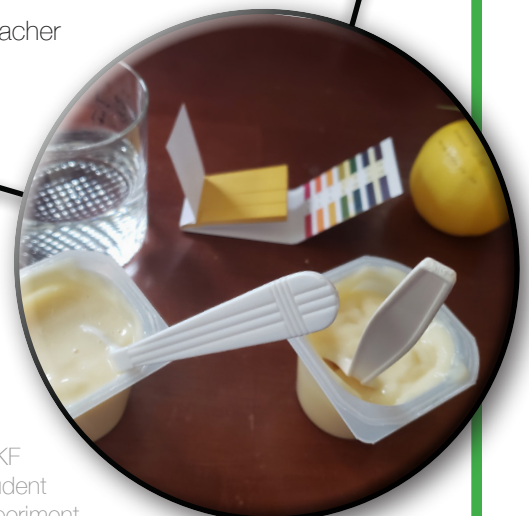
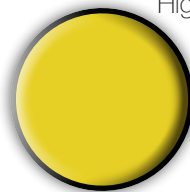
—Johnathan, 2016 Kirkness Scholar

“As a Professor in the Civil Engineering Department, I have been fortunate to host numerous Grade 11 Indigenous students in my lab as part of the Kirkness Program. The students I have met were incredibly enthusiastic and I was impressed with their ability to learn new skills and apply them to the real world problem of designing cost-effective sustainable buildings. They worked very hard all week alongside my graduate students to develop innovative solutions using state-of-the-art building information modeling tools. I believe that this hands on experience really helped them to see the importance of engineering, and perhaps more importantly, to see that they could potentially become scientists or engineers.”

—Sheryl Staub-French, PhD, PEng,
UBC Professor & VJKF Program Mentor

“One of our students attended a week at the University of Victoria last year and we have to say that it was such a success for her. She has struggled with health and anxiety which has impacted her ability to participate fully in school but going to UVic showed her some of the fields of study available. The staff worked with her to manage her disabilities and really set her up for success. Her mother has said that the program was transformative and really opened up a new world of opportunities, in such an inclusive way. She never felt uncomfortable for not being visibly Indigenous or for having health limitations. We highly recommend the program and will encourage another of our students to attend this year.”

—Lisa Moore,
High School Teacher



VJKF
Student
Experiment
What's in Your Food,
Agriculture and Agri-Foods
Canada



Virtual Program Sample

Virtual Program Agenda					
Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00–8:15	VJKF Welcome with students	Group Zoom	Group Zoom	Group Zoom	Group Zoom
8:15–8:45		SHAD Canada Scholarship	Scholarship opportunities	The Magic of Science	Group Work
8:45–9:00	Break	Break	Break	Break	Break
9:00–9:20	VJKF Welcome, Elder Prayers	Class/Lab 1 hour	Class/Lab 1 Hour	Class/Lab 1 Hour	Class/Lab 1 Hour
9:20–10:00	Introductions & icebreakers				
10:00–10:15	Break	Break	Break	Break	Break
10:15–11:15	Virtual Tours of Universities	Class/Lab 1 hour 45 min	Class/Lab 1 hour 45 min	Class/Lab 1 hour 45 min	Class/Lab 1 hour 45 min
11:15–12:00	e-mentoring opportunities				
LUNCH: 12:00–12:30					
12:30–1:30	Class/Lab 1 hour	Concurrent sessions with Universities 1hour 30min	Indigenous Plants of Significance to Science	Dan Wildcat KEYNOTE speaker	GROUP presentations
1:30–1:45	Break		Break	Break	Break
1:45–2:00	Class/Lab 30 min	Break	Group Work	Group Work	GROUP presentations
2:00–2:15					
2:15–2:30	Group Zoom	Group Zoom	Group Zoom	Group Zoom	
5:00–6:00				Certificate celebration	
6:00–7:00	TikTok Science Challenge		Group Presentation Info session		

Campus Program Sample

(Example UBC in-person program)

Sunday, May 13

- 3:30–4:30 Arrival Place Vanier Residences
- 6:00–9:00 Dinner in Place Vanier Residence Cafeteria
Introduction to the Kirkness Program
- 11:00 Curfew

Monday, May 14

- 8:00–8:45 Meet chaperones in residence common room and go to breakfast – pick-up bagged lunches
- 9:00–11:00 Sty-Wet-Tan Hall – Elder Larry Grant and Host Linc Kessler
- 11:0–4:30 Mentors or representatives from the labs will meet students in Place Vanier Residence Cafeteria—lab time
- 4:30 Return to Place Vanier Residence
- 5:30 Dinner Place Vanier Residence Cafeteria
- 6:30–9:00 Introduction to Kirkness Program, plus Social Media & Blogging

Tuesday, May 15

- 8:00 Meet chaperones in Place Vanier Residence common room and go to breakfast
- 9:00 Students meet their mentors at Place Vanier Residence Cafeteria—lab time
- 12:00 Lunch with lab groups
- 4:15 Return to Place Vanier Residence
- 4:30 Dinner in Place Vanier Residence Cafeteria with chaperones
- 7:00–9:00 Kirkness Program T-Shirt Design

Wednesday, May 16

- 8:00 Meet chaperones in Place Vanier Residence common room and go to breakfast
- 9:00 Students meet their mentors at the Place Vanier Residence Cafeteria—lab time
- 12:00 Lunch with lab groups
- 4:30–5:00 Return to Place Vanier Residence
- 5:30 Dinner with chaperones in Place Vanier Residence Cafeteria
- 6:00–9:00 Homework Night in Sty-Wet-Tan

Thursday, May 17

- 8:00 Meet chaperones in Place Vanier Residence Common room and go to breakfast
- 9:00 Students meet by their mentors at Place Vanier Residence Cafeteria—lab time
- 12:00 Lunch with lab groups
- 4:30 Return to Place Vanier Residence
- 6:00–9:00 Traditional Feast—Sty Wet Tan

Friday, May 18

- 8:00 Meet chaperones in Place Vanier Residence common room and go to breakfast
- 9:00 Students meet by their mentors at Place Vanier Residence Cafeteria
—prep time for presentations
- 12:00 Lunch with lab groups
- 1:00–4:30 Student presentations in Lecture Hall
- 5:00 Departures—some students may stay over to Saturday for travel

Many Kirkness graduates return to volunteer as ambassadors. While our Ambassador Program is currently being revamped and will launch later this year, we look forward to having our Kirkness Ambassadors participate at future events with us.

Ambassador activities include:

- VJKF conference booth
- Student welcome on campus
- Honour dinner talks
- Media engagements
- Testimonials
- Zoom meetings with prospective VJKF students and parents
- On-campus buddy to new university students on campus

KIRKNESS AMBASSADORS





VERNA J. KIRKNESS
EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Partner Universities & Funders



DALHOUSIE
UNIVERSITY



FIRST NATIONS
UNIVERSITY
of CANADA



THE UNIVERSITY
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



UNIVERSITY OF
ALBERTA



University
of Victoria



UNIVERSITY OF
CALGARY



KWANTLEN
POLYTECHNIC
UNIVERSITY



University
of Manitoba



McGill
UNIVERSITY



UNIVERSITY OF
SASKATCHEWAN



MEMORIAL
UNIVERSITY



Queen's
UNIVERSITY

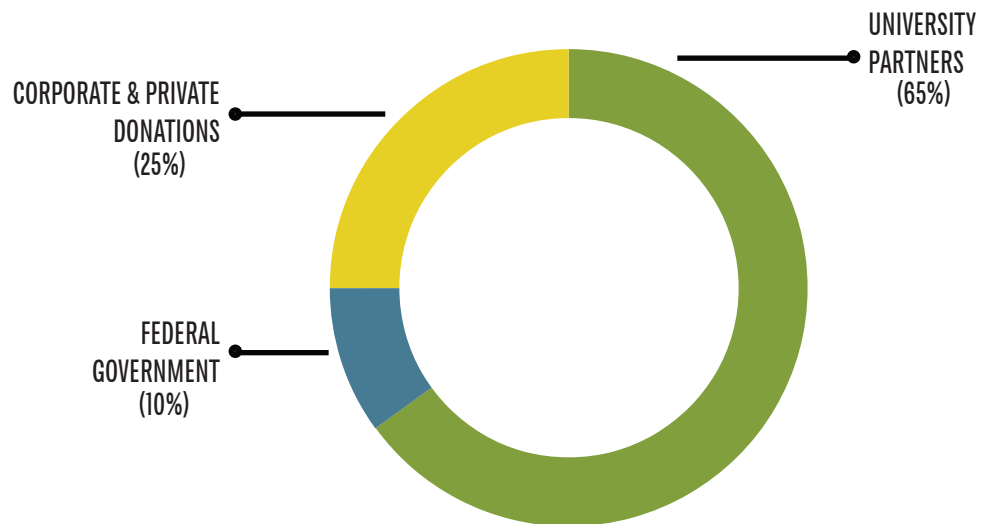


uOttawa

PROGRAM FUNDING

The VJKF program is funded by university partners, the federal government, and corporate and private donations. While the percentage of support varies between the supporting groups annually, typical annual support for students and our program is seen in the chart to the right.

Approximate Annual Funding by Donor Type



MAJOR SUPPORTERS & SPONSORS

For a complete list of our donors, please visit our website.



The Flanagan Foundation

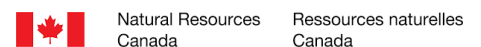


Dr. Ron Woznow & Susan O'Brien

The Fred & Karen Green Fund of the Vancouver foundation



Canada First Nations and Inuit Youth Employment Strategy (FNIYES)



POWER CORPORATION OF CANADA



OUR VOLUNTEERS

AVERAGE NUMBER OF VOLUNTEER HOURS

3300	Professors
9900	Graduate Students
90	Ambassadors
1300	Site Chaperones
60	Elders
2500	VJKF Board of Directors
300	University Staff
50	Other volunteer positions

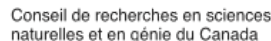
17,500

VOLUNTEER HOURS PER YEAR



Dr. Catherine Mavriplis
NSERC Chair for Women in Science and Engineering.

**Hon. Thomas Berger
& Bev Berger**



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