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“Kwe’ Eskasoni” wins Gold at the 2022 Canadian Online Publishing Awards

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HALIFAX, N.S. – University of King’s College and Nova Scotia Community College students and faculty from the 2022 [Reporting in Mi’kma’ki](#) course have won Gold for Best Multicultural Story in the Academic category of the [Canadian Online Publishing Awards](#) (COPA). The Gold Award was given for “[Kwe’ Esaksoni](#)” published on *The Signal*, the online platform for student work run by King’s journalism programs. The story outlines the intent of Reporting in Mi’kma’ki, “to ensure budding journalists know how to report responsibly [about the Mi’kmaq], avoid stereotypes, and centre L’nuéy voices in their coverage.” Students in the course pursue these goals through a combination of workshops, in-class learning and time spent visiting a First Nations community, in this case, Eskasoni First Nation.

“Kwe’ Eskasoni” links to four distinct stories that use text, video and photography to explore the theme that guided the 2022 course—Mi’kmaw-led conservation work. Rogers Chair in Journalism Trina Roache calls the course, “an incredible learning experience for our students.”

“We emphasize the importance of building relationships, responsibility, respect, and reciprocity. I could see these fundamental principles in action as students took so much care crafting the stories and striving for excellence.”

For Roache, the award recognizes more than the reporting itself, it also celebrates the contributions of the Mi’kmaq featured in the stories.

“This Gold award acknowledges the hard work of our students but also the wonderful and vital work Mi’kmaq in Eskasoni are doing around conservation and protection of resources based on traditional knowledge and Etuaptmumk (Two-Eyed Seeing). Congrats to Eskasoni! And wela’liek (thank you), for welcoming us.”

King’s President William Lahey says the course is an important manifestation of the university’s ongoing efforts to address the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada’s Calls to Action for higher education. “I’m so pleased to see this ground-breaking course, and the hard work of the students and staff from both King’s and Nova Scotia Community College who participated in Reporting in Mi’kma’ki last spring, as well as the Eskasoni First Nation community members who hosted them, recognized in this way.

“This course has led the way on broader efforts at King’s to address the TRC Calls to Action for higher education. As students in this course have learned to report responsibly, embracing the values of ‘respect, responsibility, relationships and reciprocity,’ we need to ensure that these are woven through

our relationship to the Mi'kmaq, as an institution that sits on unceded Mi'kmaw land. That's why we've established a Mi'kmaw and Indigenous Advisory Circle with representatives of Nova Scotia's First Nations communities, along with Mi'kmaw student, faculty and staff representatives to ensure that Indigenous perspectives are part of our decision-making process. It's why we, along with Mount Saint Vincent University, have created the role of Auntie-in-Residence to help support Indigenous students at King's, which is particularly important as we prepare to welcome the first cohort of Mi'kmaw journalism students, a first-in-Canada program to encourage greater representation of Mi'kmaw voices in journalism."

Second-year Master of Journalism student Haeley Cook DiRisio was one of the students in the award-winning Reporting in Mi'kma'ki course. In an account [published to ukings.ca](#), Cook DiRisio described how the course impacted her professional development.

"The Reporting in Mi'kma'ki course taught me to be a better journalist. Elder Albert Marshall spoke with us on one of our last days in Eskasoni and said there is a need to decolonize journalism. We need to be the storytellers for those that have been silenced. When it comes to the newsroom, we as journalists have an obligation to get the whole truth and tell the full story. This course will be something I reference when working to decolonize my own journalism and to help create a space for diversity in the newsroom when I start my career."

The COPAs recognize the best digital content in Canada across four categories (Academic, B2B, B2C and News/Sports), making it the largest digital publishing awards program in the country. The judging was conducted by a panel of more than 90 individuals representing expertise in the creative fields, digital, web, tech marketing, media and publishing.

Since its first delivery in 2021, Reporting in Mi'kma'ki has been made possible through a generous gift, that continues to support the course, from Kathy Pratt LeGrow, BA'70.

The full list of students and faculty who participated in Reporting in Mi'kma'ki in 2022 is: Haeley Cook DiRisio, Reporter; Mitchell Ferguson, Reporter; Caitlyn Mearns, Reporter; Lauren Phillips, Reporter; Connor Sampson, Reporter; David Joseph Shuman, Reporter; Yara Younes, Reporter; Trina Roache, Editor; Erin Moore, Editor; Terra Tailleur, Editor.

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About the University of King's College

Established in 1789, King's College is Canada's oldest chartered university and is associated with Dalhousie University. A small and extraordinarily lively academic community located in Halifax (Kjipuktuk), Nova Scotia, King's is known nationally and internationally for its highly acclaimed interdisciplinary programs in the humanities, including its renowned Foundation Year Program, its professional programs in journalism and its fine arts programs in creative writing.

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