



VIUFA Human Rights and International Solidarity Committee (HRISC) 2021-22 Report

2021-22 saw a number of us back on campus teaching face-to-face, while others taught virtually or a hybrid combination. While we may have had better Zoom skills, the year remained challenging with students and colleagues succumbing to COVID-19 and its variants, as well as the noticeable increase in mental health issues.

The racism and hate of last year continue unabated (or we are simply more aware with greater reportage). My HRISC potpourri of resources remains a weekly constant, except during the December holiday break. Thanks to my amazing work-op, Katie Rosnau, who created a database out of these, VIUFA members have a [searchable resource](#). These (over 2000 listings) include webinars, opinion pieces and more on a range of social justice topics from climate change to misogyny to anti-racism. (Note: most newspapers and magazines behind a paywall can be accessed through the VIU Library.)

This resource undertaken on my own initiative matches one of the three workplan elements assigned to FPSE HRISC for 2021-22, that is, *"In support of Resolution 151, develop a database of anti-racism resources such as books, articles, workshops, webinars, campaigns and activist contact lists accessible to the membership."* VIUFA and FPSE need to agree on how the database will be supported, maintained, and linked to be accessible beyond VIU.

In the fall, HRISC may have been the first to host a substantial in-person event at Malaspina Theatre (shout out to Eliza Gardiner and Robin Boxwell). A screening of Ep3 Migration + Resilience, [British Columbia: An Untold History](#), courtesy of Knowledge Network, followed by a [panel discussion](#) (1:14:30), was held during World VIU Days. AVP Student Services, Irlanda Gonzalez Price, moderated, with Michael Abe, Sharanjit (Sharn) Kaur Sandhra, and me as panellists. The screening/panel was also supported by PCHC-Museum of Migration (travel for Sharn Sandhra).

HRISC ended the VIU spring semester celebrating student creativity and scholarship, in collaboration with CREATE, in its second Anti-Racism Arts Festival (ARAF). HRISC was able to award a Best in Show to Enigye (Happy) Amarkah for his sculptural installation, *Surviving Agony*, and an Honourable Mention to Kristine Williams for her Rant Like Rick entry. Due to the number of entries and their quality, only half of the ARAF funds were used, leaving \$300 to be awarded next year.

One other event, the Reel Resistance Film/Panel Series, co-hosted by Resilience BC's Nanaimo/Ladysmith Spoke (N/L Spoke) and HRISC, runs until June (last Tuesday of the month—since February). The group meets weekly to organize this series. HRISC joined forces supporting the N/L Spoke in offering a space to have open discussions following the screening of topical film shorts. Join Reel Resistance for the remaining dates, April 26, May 31, and June 28, from 6 to 8pm, Nanaimo Campus, B200/R203. Every event includes a raffle of anti-racism themed books.

Regarding the international solidarity aspect of this committee, HRISC donated \$210 to CoDevelopment Canada's annual fundraiser. This year's theme was "Spotlight on Cuba: Solidarity Amidst Blockade and Pandemic." Due to health concerns, this was a simple donation rather than sponsoring tickets to attend the event.

On the local community scene, HRISC supported Rise Bridge and the downtown warming centre (\$150) along with donations from SWC and VIUFA. As well, HRISC donated \$219 to CVI Multicultural Society for refugees seeking mental health support.

As Chair of HRISC, I represented VIUFA at FPSE meetings (Federation of Post-Secondary Educators) held virtually this year: October 15-16, 2021, and February 4-5, 2022. With only two formal meetings a year, a number of locals began meeting monthly to get HRISC work done, especially with the organization of the Speakers Series 'Tour,' which consisted of two virtual sessions. The theme was [Exploitation at Home and Abroad](#), with the February 22 event dedicated to Migrant Workers, and March 10 to Canadian mining-related worker and human rights issues.

Through my contact with Story to Action (STA), Kent Donguines and his film, *Kalinga (Care)*, were part of the Migrant Worker Panel. As well, because of the STA connection, I was aware of the film, *What About Our Future?*, which I recommended to the VIUSU Eco Club. STA supported its screening co-hosted by the Eco Club and HRISC during Global Citizens Week.

Though I sat last year on the quarterly meetings of VIU's President's Committee of Diversity, Equity, and Human Rights, no meetings were convened this year, likely due to the lack of a permanent replacement for the Director, Office of Diversity, Equity, and Human Rights. By the time of the VIUFA AGM, we may know whether this position has been filled. Due to timing, I was only able to attend a portion of the first of two candidates presenting themselves to VIU personnel beyond the three members of the hiring committee.

As well, in representing the union, I am one of a few faculty invited to sit on a program being developed by the Provost's Office, Connection Points, to support new hires from equity-deserving groups becoming part of the VIU community. From December to the end of this month, we will have met three times.

In July 2021, I was part of the Ministry's Community Roundtables on Anti-Racism in Education. An Anti-Racism Roundtable Follow-Up occurred this past December. With two colleagues from the community, we provided feedback on finalizing the Ministry's K-12 Anti-Racism in Education Action Plan.

Much gratitude to this year's HRIS Committee members: Gillian Anderson, Jean-Guy Robichaud, and Ann Rogers.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as Chair of HRISC.

Respectfully submitted,

Imogene Lim, Chair, HRISC