

2018 Pounamu Taonga Award Recipient



Spencer Greening

Spencer Greening is Tsimshian from the Gitga'at First Nation. He completed a BA in First Nations Studies in 2011 and went on to earn a Clear Pass for his MA thesis in Interdisciplinary Studies in the Fall of 2017. His very original thesis research rooted in Tsimshian knowledge and practices proved that he could blend traditional Tsimshian ways of knowing with western academic practices in order to enrich the value of research within both his own nation and the academy. During his MA research, he returned home to Gitga'at to learn from the Elders of his nation and to immerse himself within the language.

Spencer was a respected Teaching Assistant in FNST. As a graduate student, he worked as a Research Assistant for Dr. Jim McDonald and on another project with Dr. Antonia Mills. During his time at UNBC, Spencer was elected as the First Nations Representative to the Northern British Columbian Graduate Students Society (NBCGSS) and he was a member of the UNBC Orientation Committee.

Spencer has been one of several co-authors for a recently published article in the leading journal, *American Anthropologist*. This article demonstrates his successful academic relationship with respected academics including the internationally renowned ethnobotanist Dr. Nancy Turner. In the last year, Spencer has also presented papers at national level conferences in the field.

In 2015, at the request of the Elders, Spencer ran and was elected as a Band Councillor for the Gitga'at First Nation. He actively served the community in that role for two years. Prior to that, Spencer served the community in two different capacities: Gitga'at First Nation Cultural Research Coordinator; and Gitga'at First Nation Environmental Assessment Coordinator. He also served the Aboriginal community in Prince Rupert through his involvement in the Aboriginal Role Model Program, of School District 52.

Spencer is presently a PhD student in Anthropology at SFU. His research with the Elders of his community focuses on documenting the knowledge surrounding one of his nation's ancient village sites.