

Over 300 Indigenous students share over \$1.4 M in awards

VICTORIA – Rebecca White is a First Nations student with her sights set on becoming a nurse. She has moved closer to achieving that goal courtesy of a \$3,000 Indigenous Student Award she received from the BC Scholarship Society.

White is one of 326 Indigenous students to receive more than \$1.4 million in awards from the Society in support of their studies at public post-secondary institutions throughout the province. White shared that the *Award* she received will help her and her son through the coming school year. *“I have been gifted with the ability to solely focus on school without worrying about how to cover the bills.”*

The Society’s Indigenous Student Awards program is funded from the returns on a \$10 million endowment fund established by the Province of British Columbia in 2007. It was created to assist in removing barriers to higher education for Indigenous peoples. Awards of \$3,000 to \$5,000 each are issued every year through a competitive process open to Indigenous students studying at all post-secondary levels, from trades training to doctoral programs.

“The Indigenous Student Awards are supporting Indigenous students in achieving their academic goals,” said Selina Robinson, Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills. “The BC Scholarship Society is helping students like Rebecca by making education more affordable and creating a path forward towards the good jobs we need for our growing economy.”

The Indigenous population in British Columbia is growing at more than triple the rate of the non-Indigenous population, with nearly 45% under the age of 25.

Firas Abbasi was recently chosen as the Society Board’s new Chair. He explains that *“a high-functioning and healthy community must cultivate participation from all perspectives. The BC Scholarship Society’s Indigenous Awards Program aims to advance the social and economic inclusion of Indigenous people in our province by removing some of the systemic obstacles to education.”*

This award program supports the achievement of Article 21 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: *Indigenous peoples have the right, without discrimination, to the improvement of their economic and social conditions, including, inter alia, in the areas of education, employment, vocational training and retraining, housing, sanitation, health and social security. It also addresses UN Sustainable Development Goal #4, namely to “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.”*

The BC Scholarship Society provides scholarships and awards to students attending public post-secondary institutions throughout the province and internationally. Since its inception, nearly \$34 million has been distributed to B.C. students through its six scholarship and award programs. The Victoria Foundation provides administrative support to the Society.

Information about 2024/25 Indigenous Awards can be found at <https://www.bcscholarshipsociety.ca/indigenous-awards/about-this-award/>

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