



## Welcome to the 2022-23 School Year!

***Editor's Note: With a near-record 212 students anticipated on campus this "near-normal" year, we wanted to share these edited remarks of welcome by Craig Davis, President and Head of Pearson College UWC with the community.***

Welcome everyone and particularly to our new Year 49s -- for some of you this has been quite a challenge just to get here. It's great to see you all -- returning Years 48 and new Years 49. How inspiring to see everyone gathering outdoors together with our staff, faculty, volunteers, Houseparents and campus residents.

Our tradition of naming each academic year based on the number of years from the 1974 founding of the College highlights how close we are to our 50th anniversary here in this beautiful location on Pedder Bay on the traditional territory of the [Sc'ianew First Nation](#).

This year marks six decades from the founding of the first United World College in Wales. On 21 September, UWC Day, we and the entire UWC mark the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the movement. Don't forget, depending on how you look at it, with Pearson's first students arriving in Metchosin in 1974, we are arguably the second oldest of the 18 United World Colleges.

During last week's training sessions, we spent time locating ourselves, discussing identity, our multiple mixed heritages, and complex personal journeys. How, for many we do not identify with nation states but perhaps with peak experiences, food, art, sport, and ultimately connections and friendships.

This is the strength of our place here at Pearson -- a community of friendships that last a lifetime and transcend ethnicity, nationality or any other "...ity." This will be a lifetime home you can return to throughout your life, just as it was for many alumni who returned this summer to celebrate reunions.

Listening to alumni stories was inspirational. Their work -- serving global peace, conflict resolution, sustainability, climate action, refugee support, giving back to their communities and global causes -- all because they began that work cultivating a giving mindset while at Pearson. Many of them said tackling complex global political crisis was simple after having successfully negotiated dorm room manifestoes or resolving residence house conflicts or cleaning duty rosters!

They said you can't serve the United Nations or Parliament if you haven't first served each other food in the kitchen -- you cannot solve the global climate crisis if you cannot first effectively recycle on campus or grow your own vegetables in the greenhouse!

Meeting the challenges of living together in this place provides the foundation for great work later. It's because, as alumni told me, living together creates an appreciation of complexity and depth. We learn new things about each other beyond our "official" national, ethnic or gender identities or job titles.

This is the history of Pearson College and UWC -- the forging of community in the service of others whether that is in Kenya, like what some of you did with the [KULE](#) Foundation this past summer, or more locally through your service jobs on campus and in Metchosin and other South Island communities.

We learned during [SENCŌTEN language](#) training that the Salmon People of the Sc'ianew First Nation means working together -- just as the salmon are known for assembling together for collective wellbeing. This is the kind of deeper learning we gain from engaging with our Indigenous neighbours and learning their language and the deeper truths beneath the surface.

Deeper conversations that reflect the mission and values of Pearson are diametrically opposed to the echo chambers of social media: the dopamine-drilled outrage of YouTube comments or What's App groups, the forced combative Twitter exchanges or simplified TikTok reels. Here, we insist on complexity, nuance, detail and collective responsibility.

So, make sure you fully engage in community. Attend every class, every Village Gathering, every Global Affairs session, every CAS session, every house and room meetings, every kitchen duty, every advisory session, every CORE lesson, every service commitment. Not just showing up but contributing authentically. It is truly a privilege to be here, a once in a lifetime opportunity, so please recognise that full community commitment is a must.

We are a movement committed to fostering international peace and conflict resolution, intercultural connection, environmental sustainability and global equity right here in Metchosin, right here on the traditional territory of the Sc'ianew and Coast Salish peoples. Thank you and best wishes for a fun and fulfilling year!