

Indigenous Community Development through Partnered Research-Creation: Digital Film and Music Production Paradigms in Unama'ki

COMMUNITY PARTNER DESCRIPTION:

Membertou is an urban and progressive Mi'kmaq community located on Unama'ki – Cape Breton Island. With a strong focus on community growth through economic development, the spirit of Membertou is driven by its close-knit and vibrant people.

Membertou, named after Grand Chief Membertou (1510-1611), is one of five Mi'kmaq communities in Cape Breton and one of thirteen Mi'kmaq communities within the province of Nova Scotia. Membertou is an ever-expanding community, and its current population is 1,695, which includes both on and off-reserve members.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

With the support of CBU's [Centre for Sound Communities](#) (CSC), Membertou will explore the potential for digital film making and music production in Membertou to support community economic and cultural development, including Mi'kmaq language revitalization. The project team is currently exploring two main development frameworks. The first involves the research and production of digital films in Membertou, in partnership with Métis filmmaker Hank White and Stone Cold Productions; the second involves research and production of music albums and related music/language/culture learning resources, in partnership with Smithsonian Folkways Recordings. Both opportunities include multiple partners and stakeholders, including other universities and faculty researchers (inside and outside of Nova Scotia), non-profits and NGOs, as well as commercial entities and investors. The broader research program is led by Indigenous, Black and racialized communities and faculty researchers, and aims to develop a new community-university-industry partnership framework to facilitate long-term equity, diversity, inclusivity, anti-racism and decolonization in film and music research, education and industry.

PROJECTED BENEFITS:

Specific outcomes of our collaborative, community-engaged research-creation program include:

- extension of established relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners through Indigenous, collaborative, community-engaged arts-based research activities,
- a new datastore, housed at Membertou First Nation digital archive (CSC), and on ACENet in Membertou's own space. From this datastore, a report will be written to provide Smithsonian Folkways with direction regarding content development of Mi'kmaq music recordings/learning resources,
- short films providing documentary evidence of the community-engaged process in Unama'ki that will be shared widely through the CSC website,
- increasing the capabilities of Mi'kmaq students and community-based researchers, as well as Mi'kmaq communities in Unama'ki generally, related to Indigenous/non-Indigenous partnership, and research skills, and
- creating employment and learning opportunities for no less than 2 Mi'kmaq students (one MBA, one undergraduate).

