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## People



L-r: Chief Harold Aljam, Coldwater Indian Band; Graeme Barritt, president, Coast Hotels and Resorts; Chief Willie Charlie, Chehalis First Nation; and Rick Colbourne, Executive Director, LSG meet at SFU's Segal Graduate School of Business

### **First Nations leaders connect with executives in SFU-partnered program**

**November 19, 2009**

Canada's first leadership program to place senior executive officers at meetings on aboriginal reserves and get First Nations chiefs into executive suites kicked off earlier this month.

The Leadership Exchange program, created by SFU's Learning Strategies Group (LSG) in partnership with the Industry Council for Aboriginal Business (ICAB), is the first to pair aboriginal and non-aboriginal business leaders so that they can experience each other's work and cultural environments. The goal: to develop deeper business relationships based on mutual respect and understanding.

The first participants are Ian Anderson, president of Kinder Morgan Canada, Chief Kim Baird of the Tswassen First Nation, Chief Willie Charlie of the Chehalis First Nation, Donald MacInnes, vice-chairman and CEO, Plutonic Power Corporation, Harold Aljam, chief of the Coldwater Indian Band and Graeme Barrit, president, Coast Hotels and Resorts.

LSG executive director Rick Colbourne says the program grew out of conversations with ICAB, which was interested in developing a dialogue between aboriginal and non-aboriginal senior leaders.

"LSG was the natural choice to partner with because of our experience in building leadership capacity for both aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities," says Colbourne. He says both LSG and ICAB recognized that there is often a disconnect between the corporate and First Nations worlds.

"The exchange provides a perspective that's not normally accessible," he explains. For example, executive participants will host a senior aboriginal leader at their company meetings and on-site visits, and in turn will be invited to similar events in a

First Nations community.

"Being engaged in each community's culture should bring new understanding about what facilitates or constrains decision-making," says Colbourne.

He notes that the program teams up participants who don't share specific business interests so they don't feel pressured to represent their community or corporation.

"ICAB and LSG are very excited by the interest from both First Nations communities and corporations, not only here in B.C. but in Canada," says Colbourne. "It's very encouraging."

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