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## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Actua, Britannia Community Secondary School and Geering Up at the University of British Columbia pilot Indigenous Science STEM Course for local Indigenous high school students**

*Vancouver, B.C., October 2018/* Britannia Community Secondary School, in partnership with Actua, Canada's largest science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) outreach organization, and the University of British Columbia's Geering Up - Engineering Science Education program, have piloted an integrated Indigenous Science STEM Curriculum Course as part of its current Science 10 experience for local Indigenous high school students.

The program introduces students to Indigenous worldviews of culture centred around scientific ways of knowing while fulfilling all of the experiences offered in Science 10, Science and Traditional Ecological Knowledge [TEK] 10.

"Our goal is to improve Indigenous student engagement in science and STEM based career paths by showcasing the importance of cultural perspectives in shaping scientific knowledge, exploration, and application, and introduce all learners to Indigenous understandings of the natural world and their application in global science today," said Kyle Ross, Indigenous Education Teacher, Britannia Community Secondary School.

The initiative is part of Actua's national model to engage more Indigenous youth in STEM and improve high school graduation rates for Indigenous youth. Actua's national Indigenous Youth in STEM (InSTEM) program partners with Indigenous communities, local school boards, and network members at universities and colleges to deliver 15-day credited Indigenous STEM land camps and Indigenous STEM courses during the academic year.

"It provides a strong sense of cultural pride and identity when Indigenous youth recognize that their inherent knowledge of land based science and technology actually aligns with, and is as important as the western STEM that Actua brings to the program. We have always had STEM knowledge in our communities," said Doug Dokis, Senior Advisor, Actua National InSTEM Program. "When these two knowledges are combined in one program for credit, Indigenous students gain a better understanding of how they can apply their local cultural knowledge to STEM related areas of study, with the hope that one day they could help their communities."

This fall, there are three similar programs in the pilot phase in Ontario, British Columbia and Alberta. Each program is unique in its own way and reflective of the regional cultural differences

of the participating school boards and Indigenous communities of the territories they are in. In Fort Chipewyan and Fort McMurray First Nations, Actua is delivering an in-class, on the land STEM high school course that runs throughout the academic year and is grounded in local harvesting practices.

**About Actua:** Actua is Canada's largest science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) youth outreach network representing 37 university and college based members. Each year, Actua's growing network of member organizations reach over 250,000 young Canadians in 500 communities nationwide. Actua focuses on the engagement of underrepresented youth through specialized programs for Indigenous youth, girls and young women, at-risk youth and youth living in Northern and remote communities. It's national InSTEM program reaches over 35,000 Indigenous youth per year in over 200 Indigenous communities. Actua's major funding partners include: Government of Canada, Google Canada, Suncor Energy Foundation, GE Canada, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, Ontario Trillium Foundation, Finning, Toyota Canada Foundation and Lockheed Martin. For more information about Actua, visit [actua.ca](http://actua.ca).

**About Britannia Secondary School:** Britannia is a multicultural inner-city Community School, with an increasing Aboriginal population, offering programs designed to meet a wide range of abilities, learning styles and educational backgrounds. We are home to: district junior enriched Venture program, senior International Baccalaureate program and junior/senior Hockey Academy. Britannia has strong ties to the community and a staff that is committed to working as a team toward the goal of helping students realize their fullest potential.

**About Geering Up:** Geering Up is a student-led non-profit organization dedicated to promoting science, engineering and technology to the children and youth in BC through fun, innovative, and hands-on experiments and projects. Geering Up offers in-school workshops, summer camps and after school clubs, providing special outreach for groups traditionally underrepresented in the sciences in their mission to reach all children and youth regardless of gender, ethnicity, culture or socioeconomic status. Geering Up provides valuable work experience to its employees and is a key resource for both mainland and rural communities.

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