



# ohpahotân oohpaahotaan

**let's fly up together**

## **INDIGENOUS STRATEGY**

**FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN**

As we gather here today, we acknowledge we are on Treaty 6 Territory and the Homeland of the Métis. We pay our respect to the First Nations and Métis ancestors of this place and reaffirm our relationship with one another.

We also acknowledge the lands and Treaty territories that constitute kisiskâciwan (Saskatchewan), and the Indigenous Peoples that call kisiskâciwan home. The University of Saskatchewan is ultimately intertribal in spirit.



UNIVERSITY OF  
SASKATCHEWAN

## Section 35 of the Constitution Act 1982

Canada's Constitution Act of 1982 recognizes and affirms our existing Aboriginal and Treaty rights, which comprise of our Indigenous constitutions. The Constitution of Canada recognizes Indians (First Nations), Inuit, and Métis as the Indigenous Peoples of Canada.

1. The existing Aboriginal and Treaty rights of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed.
2. In this Act, "Aboriginal peoples of Canada" includes the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada.
3. For greater certainty, in subsection (1) "Treaty rights" includes rights that now exist by way of land claims agreements or may be so acquired.
4. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, the Aboriginal and Treaty rights referred to in subsection (1) are guaranteed equally to male and female persons.

## kēhtē-ayak (Elders), Traditional Knowledge Keepers and Language Teachers

Eugene Arcand  
Lorna Arcand  
Bob Badger  
Marie Battiste  
Anthony Blair  
-Dreaver Johnston  
Monica Buffalo  
Maria Campbell  
Mona Creely-Johns  
Nora Cummings  
Roland Duquette  
Norman Fleury  
Louise Halfe  
Murray Hamilton  
May Henderson  
(the late) Frank Kayseas  
Enola Kayseas

Margaret Keewatin  
Kevin Lewis  
Lyndon J. Linklater  
Maria Linklater  
Randy Morin  
Larry Oakes  
Harriet Oakes-St.Pierre  
(the late) Jacob Pete  
(the late) Jacob Sanderson  
Senator Sol Sanderson  
Myrna Severight  
Edwin St. Pierre  
Cy Standing  
Sonia Starblanket  
Wendell Starblanket  
Leona Tootoosis  
Rosalie Tsannie-Burseth

### INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE TRANSLATORS

Bob Badger (Saulteaux)  
Norman Fleury (Michif)  
Kenneth Helgeson (Nakota)  
Sykes Powderface (Nakota)  
Corleigh Powderface (Nakota)  
Kelvin Dale McKay (Dakota)  
Randy Morin (Cree)  
Rosalie Tsannie-Burseth (Dene)

# An Indigenous Strategy: The ‘Right Thing to Do’

The development of an Indigenous Strategy is the ‘right thing to do’ for the University of Saskatchewan. We have constitutional/Treaty rights (e.g., Constitution Act 1982, UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples), human rights (e.g., Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948; Canadian Human Rights Act, 1977; Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, 1982), moral and ethical obligations to ensure this work is “done in a good way”, and with integrity. Moral obligation refers to individual values and internal interpretations (i.e., internal compass) of what is right and wrong in relation to standards of behaviour—the focus is on ‘right relations’ and doing the ‘right’ thing. Ethical responsibilities refer to community/collective responsibilities to fairness and justice—the obligations to humanity. The Indigenous Strategy will guide and help ensure that the work done with and alongside Indigenous peoples is driven by legal, ethical and moral responsibilities.



**DR. PETER STOICHEFF**  
President and Vice-Chancellor

**On behalf of the University of Saskatchewan, I accept the gift of this Indigenous strategy, with profound gratitude, respect and hope.**

It is with great humility that I lead a University that embraces the responsibility that this gift entails; the readiness to learn from and be guided by the wisdom of the Indigenous peoples who will lead us on the journey toward right relations; and the conviction to grow and do better as a community.

The University of Saskatchewan’s aspiration, as expressed in our University Plan 2025, is *nikānītān manāchitowinihk | ni manachihitoonaan* (to lead with respect) and to be The University the World Needs. More than ever, the world needs a University in which decolonization, reconciliation and Indigenization are an animating force. The Indigenous Strategy presented in these pages uplifts decolonization, reconciliation and Indigenization at the University of Saskatchewan because it was written by Indigenous peoples for the University. It does not read as a traditional strategy—nor should it. It speaks with the power of Indigenous voices.

I am personally committed to upholding the vitality and urgency of this document through meaningful action. Over the coming weeks, months and years, this foundational strategy will guide the choices we make as a University community. It will distinguish us as an institution and set the benchmark for how an Indigenous Strategy should be created, received and implemented. It will help the University of Saskatchewan Lead with Respect and become The University the World Needs.

miigwetch

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'P. Stoicheff', with a horizontal line underneath.

thank you

māši / pidamaya / pināmaya / miigwetch / marsee / hiy hiy

**I have strong hopes that the work done to date is not done for nothing, that this office [OVPIE] must “survive” or continue no matter what government comes in to power in order for Indigenization to have sustainability and continue its good work at USask; and to move forward for the betterment of all... To be mindful that “nehiyaw education” is different from “white education” and both are beneficial. Keep thinking and moving outside the box!**

**escowpayo (Traditional Knowledge-Keepers Helper)  
Wendell Starblanket**

## **The Many Voices of Indigenous Peoples**

The Indigenous Strategy reflects the voices of Indigenous peoples from across Saskatchewan, specifically those who have a deep connection to the University and its history; primary language groups in Saskatchewan include Plains Cree, Woodland Cree, Swampy Cree, Dene, Dakota, Lakota, Nakota, Saulteaux, and Michif. We

have communicated key Indigenous principles and terms throughout this strategy in several Indigenous languages native to Saskatchewan as a sign of respect to the voices that created this strategy and to uphold our linguistic and cultural history. Each main section of the Strategy is introduced in six Indigenous

languages—in order of appearance: Dene, Dakota, Nakota, Saulteaux, Michif and Plains Cree—in addition to English. Further, use of Indigenous terms in the body of the strategy is denoted with the Indigenous language group in parentheses.

## **Let Us Lead With Respect**

### **DEVELOPING THE INDIGENOUS STRATEGY**

The development of the Indigenous Strategy is rooted in the Indigenous principles of *nīkānitān manāchitowinihk* (Cree) and *ni manāchitooaan* (Michif)—which translates to “Let us lead with respect”. By leading with respect, we ensure that the Indigenous strategy reflects the voices of Indigenous peoples. Eight gatherings were held with Indigenous peoples over a seven-month period: a *kēhtē-ayak* (Elders) and Traditional Knowledge Keepers Gathering began

our strategic process “in a good way”, convening the largest gathering in University history. In addition to *kēhtē-ayak* (Elders) and Knowledge Keepers summits and validation sessions, an Indigenous Community Gathering of more than 80 Indigenous peoples from 29 organizations was held at Wanuskewin Heritage Park. The voices of Indigenous staff, faculty, and students were also heard during gatherings at the University, and virtually.

The Indigenous Strategy was written by and with Indigenous peoples—the answers to “Who are we?”, “Where do we come from?”, “Where are we going?” and “What are our responsibilities?” represents the voice of Indigenous peoples across Saskatchewan as an expression of self-determination and a framework to support the University’s journey towards Indigenization, decolonization and reconciliation.

# STRATEGY THROUGH INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES

## STRATEGY AS GIFT

We gift this strategy to the University of Saskatchewan. Indigenous peoples from the city of misâskwatômina (Saskatoon), the province of kisiskâciwan (Saskatchewan) and beyond; Indigenous students, staff, faculty, and leaders with a direct connection to the University; and kēhtē-ayak (Elders), oskâpêwak (Elder's Helpers), Knowledge- and Language-Keepers who recognize the University's role in building communities across this province have given voice to this strategy as an expression of self-determination, an invitation to reset relationships and gift a framework for the University of Saskatchewan's reconciliation journey.

## STRATEGY AS RECIPROCITY

As a gift, this strategy is a symbol of reciprocity and requires acknowledgment of our responsibilities. For Indigenous peoples, this strategy embodies a spirit of belonging, empowerment and hope that change is possible. For non-Indigenous peoples who have received and accepted this gift, this strategy should enlighten and guide. It creates the ethical space to imagine new models of scholarship, research, teaching and engagement that will uplift Indigenous ways of knowing and being for everyone, embolden a new kind of University of Saskatchewan student, and enrich the University's role in building resilient communities across the province, Canada and the globe.

## STRATEGY AS VOICE

Written by and with Indigenous people, this strategy's voice represents In-

digenous languages, philosophies and spirituality. Four questions central to Indigenous ways of understanding our connections to place, time and community—and our role in honouring our ancestors and shaping our shared destiny—underpin the conceptual framework of this document:

- Who are we?
- Where do we come from?
- Where are we going?
- What are our responsibilities?

At their core, these questions embody a doctrine of relationships: wâhkôhtowin. We do not simply inhabit a physical place at a moment in time. One's sense of wholeness derives from the seven generations that preceded us, the seven generations yet to come (those children not yet born), and the unassailable connections, inextricable interconnections, and relationality to our community, our environment and the cosmos that sustain life. This strategy, then, is not an attempt to recover something we've lost. It is an affirmation of the history, rights, sovereignty, vitality, strength, voice, and brilliance that have always made Indigenous peoples whole. It is an act of self-determination.

## STRATEGY AS METAPHOR

Our Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers gifted us with metaphors that captured the essence of this Indigenous strategy. We consulted with them first on the strategy and then learned teachings that embody the strategy. Teachings that can be lovingly and mindfully encased in a nayâhcikan – a parchment for safe keeping. These teachings are evident in our actions –

actions that communicate one's ethic of care for 'all my relations'.

The name of the University of Saskatchewan Indigenous Strategy is **ohpahotân**. This name symbolizes growth, journey and relational teachings that guide and strengthen our lives and work. **ohpahotân** was drawn from ohpahowipîsim (flying up moon). During this moon, after a time of being nurtured in a nest and experiencing the world from the ground, a new generation of birds take flight. There is so much symbolism to the flying up moon for our First Nations, Métis and Inuit students – and for all people.

This moon can be representative of a rite of passage. In taking flight, there is the experience of pushing past a boundary into a whole new world – a whole new perspective. In taking flight for the first time, the once baby winged ones, see creation in a new way, and once this step is taken they can never unsee this new space. Everything has just gotten more expansive, richer in colour and scope. There are new freedoms and opportunities to become more self-determined. Through **ohpahotân**, the Indigenous Strategy, the University of Saskatchewan can continue to break boundaries and push past barriers that inhibit real and long-lasting respectful relationships, ones that inspire authentic collaborations that lead to system wide transformational change. **ohpahotân** requires courage because its essence is dynamic discomfort that is required for revolutionary growth.

The metaphor of the double-helix emerged as a dynamic, resilient, continuous and non-linear process.

## STRATEGY THROUGH INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES

Each strand is unbroken, and its path is not singular. Together, the strands can stretch or compress like a coil; they can rotate in clockwise motion around each other towards the future or be reset to include the past, never leaving anything behind—memories, histories, stories, knowledges, ancestors. And with these seemingly opposing forces, despite the constant and fluid evolution, the double helix remains whole, actively striving for equilibrium and the realization of its truth. The double helix is the visible and invisible expression of creativity—emerging and being sustained by the tangled and dynamic forces of flux, the relationship of chaos and order. A double helix helps us to imagine the connections across space and generations whose integrity is central to the wholeness of Indigenous self-determination. This metaphor helps to bring character, personality, life and spirit to the Indigenous Strategy. Within our Indigenous Strategy, much like the poplar tree and its genetic code, are the cherished life forces of Indigenous breath (voices, stories, histories, ways of knowing, being and doing) meant to transform the USask ‘in good ways’ for future generations. In its transformation, we honour the past and see the truth in the present.

The bison and sweetgrass offer other teachings. For example, they teach the importance of sacrifice, sanctified kindness, reciprocal respect and using our education for ourselves as well as the collective good of others.

A bison subtly yet powerfully frames the poplar canopy. As the image suggests, the bison holds a place of prominence for Indigenous peoples of these territories. The bison generously sustained the Indigenous peoples of the Plains for thousands of years. Their presence was abundant in North America (estimated to be approximately 50

million bison just 200 years ago), until they were nearly obliterated by newcomers. Blair Stonechild (Cree-Saulteaux) explains, “Today, elders say that education, rather than the bison needs to be relied upon for survival” (2006, pp. 1-2). This is a powerful statement for the role that education has today. Like the bison, education represents hope, security and sustainability for Indigenous youth today—it is a new means of survival—not as assimilation but in balancing knowledges and encouraging the resurgence of Indigenous peoples’ aspirations and self-determination.

The bison for the Indigenous Strategy represents fortitude, endurance, and the determination to survive and thrive in the midst of struggle, challenge, and forces that were designed to silence, overcome and annihilate. The bison survived brutal systematic onslaught; Indigenous peoples have survived genocide. Strength of spirit, audacious resiliency and resolve to be present and alive are parallels between these two relatives.

Bison fiercely protect their young, and they move in herds to ensure safety. This metaphor also symbolizes the collective responsibility that our whole campus community has to encouraging and guiding our students, and those that wish to enrich their knowledge and enhance their lives, at our University; it symbolizes the responsibility we have to create safe spaces and places that are conducive to thriving.

Gracefully and gradually, the top of the bison flows into a sweetgrass braid representing interconnectedness and inextricable relationships.

Within our homes, organizations and societies, it is important to recognize the importance of braiding/

weaving together resources, actions, initiatives, programming and policies that support wholistic health, and promote values, belief systems that enhance and strengthen individual and collective identities. Robin Wall Kimmerer (Potawatomi) reminds us to be very present and mindful in the act of braiding. Before braiding sweetgrass she suggests: “Hold the bundle up to your nose. Find the fragrance...and you will understand...Breathe it in and you start to remember things you didn’t know you’d forgotten” (2013, p. ix). A braid is made tighter when two people work together, one holding firmly on one end while the other tugs and weaves the strands, both feeling the pressure of the creative energy. Inclusivity of a diversity of knowledges, cultures, and teachings from Indigenous peoples in our organization and transformations give rise to the needed tension in making our braid. We are required to do our part - to take an end of our strands, hold on tight, and provide the needed pressure and tension as we weave a tight sweetgrass braid.

## STRATEGY AS RESPONSIBILITY

If we have been successful, this strategy will awaken understanding, build relationships and inspire collaborative and respectful action driven by the spirit and intent of Treaty agreements—historic, current and future. **We Are All Treaty People.** If we have been successful, this strategy will coexist with the University Plan 2025 and allow us to walk parallel journeys toward a common future. If we have been successful, this gift will be received in the spirit intended by the Indigenous peoples who created and gifted it.

# OUR FOUR TEACHERS

This particular double helix, this DNA, this genetic code, has been in existence since time immemorial as the poplar tree. The poplar tree is sacred to Indigenous peoples of the prairies and beyond and over time they have honored the poplar tree for its sustaining relationships. Its leaves, branches, trunk, bark, roots and sap have been used to nourish, heal, shelter and bring calm and warmth to the two-legged, the four-legged, the winged ones and those that crawl.

Once released by their 'mothers' and set in motion by the wind, poplar seeds can travel great distances and when settled, they grow tall quickly, always stretching towards the sun. Poplar trees thrive in many terrains, are skilled at quickly transforming barren landscapes with their fast-growing trunks, thriving in community (Wohlleben, 2015). Poplars have strong tendencies to re(member), re(claim), restore and rejuvenate. They are social beings, well connected and great collaborators—creating partnerships that benefit the entire ecosystem. Like most trees, poplar trees work with intermediaries (soil fungi) to connect and communicate with other trees (some outside its kind) through its complex root system. They share and exchange life (nutrients, medicine, water, good energy and medicine) with their young and their old, and sometimes with others, for the benefit of all. The root system, which

can stretch well beyond its height, is the poplar's primary life force and it is almost impossible to destroy because it reproduces so quickly. Parts of it can lie dormant for years before it re(emerges) to make itself known to the world

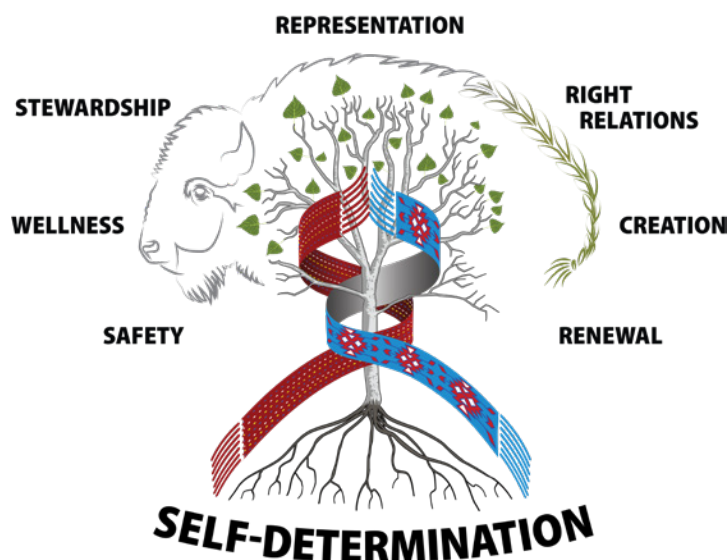
hide was used to mark a baby's arrival and was one of the first things a baby felt when born. The softened hide, the robe/cape, symbolizes the softness and gentleness of Mother Earth. (Eugene

Arcand, Cree, personal communication, September 2020).

Sweetgrass, *wiingashk* (nakawē) is the sweet-smelling hair of Mother Earth, or scientifically its named *hierochloa odorata*, which means fragrant holy grass. "[T]he braid of sweetgrass represents the body, spirit and the mind braided together to form a strong person" (Christensen, 2000, p. 18). The sacred plant has many medicinal and purification purposes,

and when used for a smudge it elicits positive energy, good intentions and relationships. *wiingashk* "thrives where it is used and disappears elsewhere" (Wall Kimmerer, 2013, p. 165). It flourishes and is stimulated/awakened when it is picked in sustainable and mindful ways. Sweetgrass yearns to be in reciprocal, respectful relationships; and, in the act of braiding the 21 strands, one is reminded of the importance of balance, wholistic health, community, and the beauty of sacrifice.

We thank the kēhtē-ayak (Elders) and Knowledge Keepers for their metaphors and their deep wisdom and guidance in shaping this Indigenous Strategy for the University of Saskatchewan.



above the soil. Because of all this and more, the poplar tree is essential to some ceremonies.

For many Indigenous peoples, the bison is a "sacred gift placed on Mother Earth for the survival of Indian people" (Christensen, 2000, p. 15-16). Every part of the bison provided life to Indigenous peoples—shelter, warmth, nourishment, hunting and warrior weaponry, containers, tools, protection—nothing was wasted. This one helper, the bison, sustained its people entirely with every part of its physical self. Specific parts of the bison are still used in ceremony. The soft cape hide and tufting, (found on the tip of the tail) can be seen on ceremonial eagle staffs. The softest part of the



## **Our Connection to Land**

While the conventional interpretation of the land is something that is immovable or inert, an Indigenous perspective of the term 'land' is something more. Land is viewed in a more 'wholistic' sense as a living, breathing ecosystem and territory; a kin connection in an Indigenous worldview; and a place that we must learn from, nurture and sustain. For many of the kēhtē-ayak (Elders) engaged in developing this Strategy, Indigenous languages, protocols, stories, histories, and ways of knowing and being are intrinsically tied to the land. The land has always been our first teacher.



ēdłaghī?at'ī?a? / ountounwapi he? / dúwebi he?  
wenan neenawint? / awayna niiyaanaan? / awīna ōma kiyānaw?  
who are we?

## **WE ARE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES**

Kisiskāciwan (Saskatchewan) comprises territory on four Treaty areas, and Saskatoon is on one of those, Treaty Six, whose First Nations Peoples entered into Treaty and laid the foundations for the provinces' self-governance. Canada's Constitution Act of 1982 recognizes and affirms our existing Aboriginal and Treaty rights, which comprise our Indigenous constitutions. The Constitution of Canada recognizes Indians (First Nations), Inuit, and Métis as the Indigenous Peoples of Canada. As the original peoples of this land, represented as Turtle Island to some of us, we represent diverse knowledges, including a diversity of cultures, languages, traditions, and histories of our Indigenous ancestors, coming from many parts of the continent, and live as vibrant, distinctive, and sovereign Nations and peoples throughout Canada. Our knowledges are distinctive to the unique ecosystems and territories in which we live, and we are thus deeply embedded in the fabric of the land and territories, its histories, and its development. Our Nations across Canada continue to grow, with over 1.6 million people living in all of the provinces and territories across Canada. While the Constitution Act recognizes three distinctive groups, Indians (First Nations), Inuit, and Métis, it overlooks our inherent diversity; with over 700 Métis, First Nations and Inuit Nations across Canada, possessing a rich linguistic history that includes over 60 distinct Indigenous languages within 12 linguistic families.

## **WE ARE INTEGRAL TO THE UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN COMMUNITY**

Indigenous peoples have lived on the land now known as Saskatchewan—in the tip of a vast maskotew (prairie ecosystem) that blends into ayapāskweyāw (a northern bush ecosystem)—since time immemorial. Indigenous peoples comprise more than 16% of Saskatchewan's population (>175,000 people)<sup>1</sup>, having grown 22% since 2006 and representing over 70 Nations. We have a deep connection to the University of Saskatchewan. Indigenous peoples made important contributions early in the University's history. As examples, Edward Ahenakew (Cree, from the Ahtahkakoop First Nation) was USask's first Indigenous graduate in 1910; James McKay, the first Indigenous (Métis) judge appointed to the Saskatchewan court in 1914, served on the University's first Board of Governors; Annie Maude "Nan" McKay, the first Métis student and Indigenous woman to graduate from USask in 1915, was one of USask's earliest Indigenous hires and was instrumental in forming the alumni association; and, more recently, Dr. Karla Jessen Williamson (kalaaleq) became the first Inuk to be tenured at any Canadian University.

Over the past century, the University's connections with Indigenous peoples, cultures, histories and traditions have vastly expanded and strengthened, helping to advance understanding of the history of Indigenous peoples

and issues affecting all Canadians. Today, Indigenous peoples' strong connections with the University of Saskatchewan and integral contributions to the University's innovative Indigenous programming, research, scholarship, community engagement and governance are uplifting the experience of reconciliation and helping to deepen the University's Indigenization, reconciliation and decolonization efforts.

## **WE ARE ALL OUR RELATIONS**

Our relations with our families, our communities, our Nations, our cultures and our territories are fundamental to Indigenous ways of knowing and integral to Indigenous self-determination. Our connections transcend time and space; we have relations with and are responsible for the seven generations that came before us and the seven generations yet to come. Indigenous peoples appreciate that everyone and everything in the world has a purpose and is worthy of our respect and compassion. We have a responsibility to be stewards of all that is Mother Earth—to learn from the land and its ecosystems, to understand the nature of things, and to nurture and sustain the place that has given us our life and our livelihood.

<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada. (2017). *Focus on Geography Series, 2016 Census*. (Catalogue no. 98-404-X201600). Retrieved September 9, 2020 from Statistics Canada: <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/fogs-spg/Facts-PR-Eng.cfm?TOPIC=9&LANG=Eng&GK=PR&GC=47>

**We're not just carrying a document, we're carrying a home and our children. The very essence and center of our culture is our children. We carry our kids and make a place for our people. Especially if we think of reconciliation, that came about because of the way that children were treated. There'd be no University without young people. They're going to inherit whatever we're carrying.**

**kēhtē-aya (Elder) Maria Campbell**

The following legislation, declarations and reports—among many treaties and agreements over the centuries—support our resolve and collective responsibility to right relations and peaceful coexistence, as well as our moral and ethical responsibilities to develop an Indigenous Strategy and ensure the work is done “in a good way”:

- *Aboriginal and Treaty rights in Constitution Act 1867 (originally known as the British North America Act)*
- *Indian Control of Indian Education, National Indian Brotherhood (1972)*
- *Section 35 of the Canadian Constitution ensuring Aboriginal Rights (1982)*
- *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996)*
- *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007)*
- *Association of Canadian Deans of Education: Accord for Indigenous Education (2010)*
- *Indian Residential School Truth and Reconciliation Commission Final Report (2015)*

ëdłĩni?ots'į?ait'įá? / tokitahan ounhipi he?  
dókiya ecídayabi he? / ahndi gaa ondosayang?  
taanday ooshchiiyaahk? / tāntē ōma ē ohtohtēyahk?  
where do we come from?

#### **WE COME FROM CREATOR**

We are original peoples, distinct peoples, as depicted through our stories of creation and life.

#### **WE COME FROM TURTLE ISLAND AND ITS UNIQUE ECOSYSTEMS AND TERRITORIES**

We have lived on Turtle Island since time immemorial. We built sophisticated settlements and nurtured thriving communities across this great land. As stewards of Mother Earth, we have a special relationship with this land and all the beings that live here—all have spirit. We hunt, gather and fish on this land. We cultivate the soil and harvest food for our families. We respect and revere the land and take care to sustain it so that future generations can enjoy its beautiful gifts.

#### **WE COME FROM A LEGACY OF RESILIENCE AND SELF-DETERMINATION**

We have stood strong in the face of injustice. Ever since the arrival of the “newcomer” some 500 years ago,

Indigenous peoples have experienced unspeakably harsh realities. Our land was and continues to be colonized by settlers. Our communities were displaced. Our languages, cultures and belief systems were challenged. We were and are subject to racism and oppression. Here, in Canada, our children were forcibly apprehended from their families and placed in Indian Residential Schools or Métis residential or day schools where they experienced severe cultural, emotional, spiritual, physical, and sexual abuse. Canada used education as a weapon of genocide.

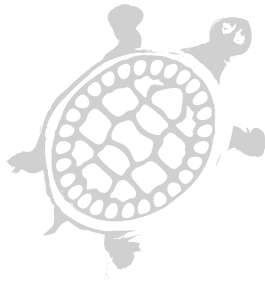
#### **WE COME FROM A PLACE THAT VALUES RELATIONSHIPS**

With deep appreciation for the interconnectedness of all things, we recognize the value of maintaining right relations with our families, our communities and all peoples who inhabit Turtle Island and its unique ecosystems and territories. Throughout history, there are many examples of fruitful collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. We have traded goods. We have learned from each other's

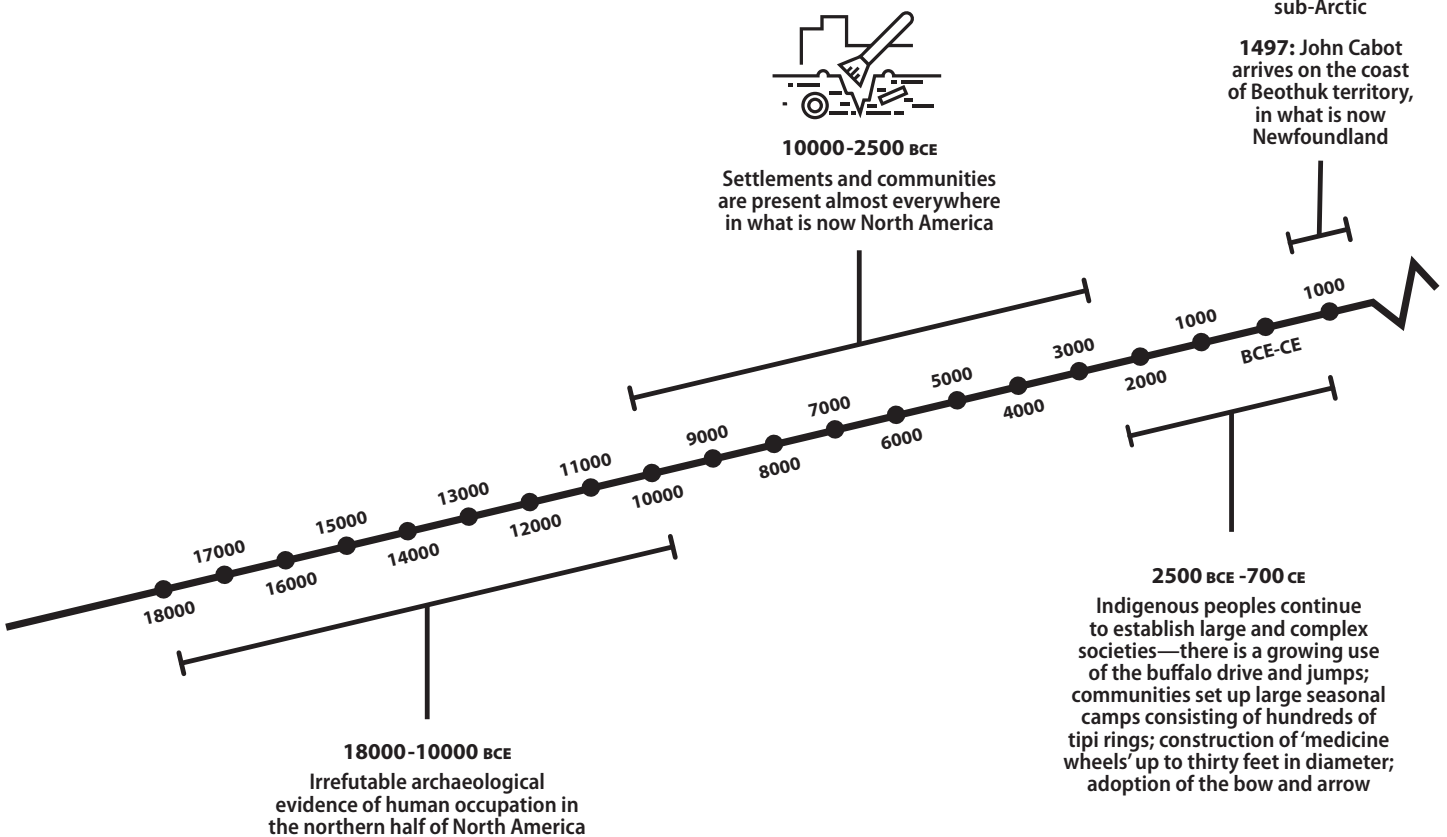
cultures. We have established historic treaties for peaceful coexistence. Through transformative decolonization that creates space for Indigenization and reconciliation, we have an opportunity and an obligation to reset damaged relationships and rebuild trust between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples—rooted in mutual recognition, mutual respect, sharing and mutual responsibility (the four principles of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996).

#### **WE COME FROM A PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE SHAPED BY HOPE**

We have long hoped for peace and prosperity. Despite the challenges that our communities have faced, we continue to believe in the promise of a brighter tomorrow. Fulfilling this promise will require us to challenge deep rooted systems, structures, narratives and thinking to promote decolonization, reconciliation and Indigenization. We are hopeful about the University of Saskatchewan's commitment to these three principles and welcome the opportunity to support you in this mission.



## WESTERN TIMELINE OF THE Indigenous Peoples of Turtle Island





**1857:** The Gradual Civilization Act is passed to encourage assimilation of Indigenous peoples to Euro-Canadian values

**1869:** The Red River Resistance led to the formation of a provisional Métis government and negotiated entry of Manitoba into the Confederation

**1871:** Treaty 2, first signing

**1874:** Treaty 4, first signing

**1875:** Treaty 5, first signing

**1876:** Treaty 6, first signing

**1876:** The Indian Act is passed on the premise that economic, social, and political regulation of First Nations peoples (and lands) would facilitate assimilation

**1883:** Prime Minister John A. MacDonald authorizes the creation of Residential Schools to force Indigenous children to assimilate to Euro-Canadian culture and practices

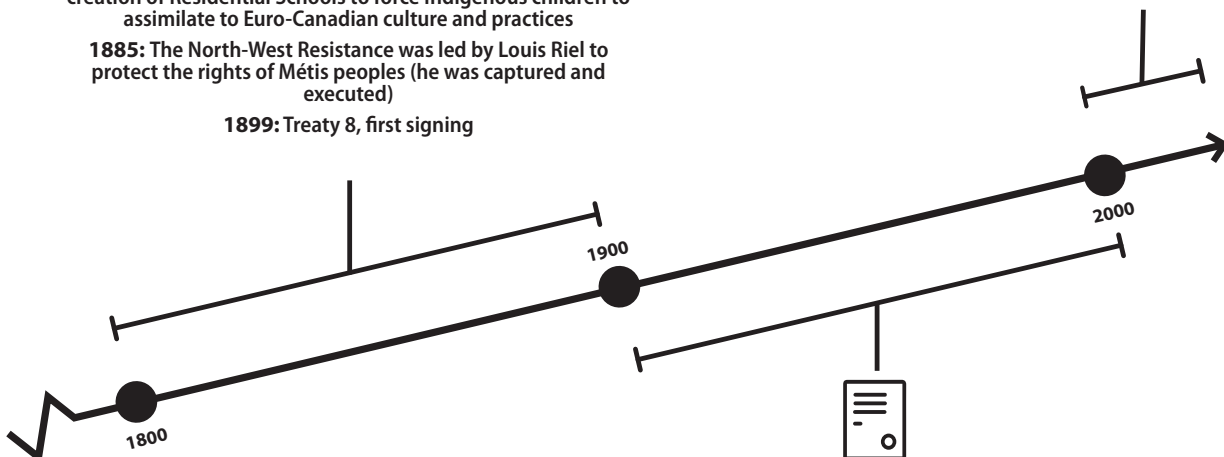
**1885:** The North-West Resistance was led by Louis Riel to protect the rights of Métis peoples (he was captured and executed)

**1899:** Treaty 8, first signing

**2015:** The Indian Residential School Truth and Reconciliation Commission issues its final report, documenting the experiences of ~150,000 Residential School students and survivors

**2016:** Canada officially signs the 2007 UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which recognizes Indigenous peoples' rights to self-determination, cultural practices, land, and security

**2016:** Métis become "Indians" under s.91(24) of the Constitution Act 1867, as part of the SCC findings in Daniels v. Canada



**1906:** Treaty 10, first signing

**1939:** Inuit peoples become "Indian" under s. 91(24) of the Constitution Act 1867.

**1982:** The Canadian Constitution is patriated, and thanks to the advocacy of Indigenous peoples, Section 35 recognizes and affirms Aboriginal title and Treaty rights

**1982:** The Assembly of First Nations is formed out of the National Indian Brotherhood to promote the interests of First Nations in the realm of self-government, respect for Treaty rights, education, health, land, and resources

**1983:** The Métis National Council was founded

**1996:** The final report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples is published, recommending a public inquiry into the effects of Residential Schools and calls for improved relations between governments, Indigenous peoples, and non-Indigenous Canadians



## Gordon Oakes Red Bear Student Centre

Opened in January 2016 as an intercultural gathering place, the Gordon Oakes Red Bear Student Centre brings together the teachings, traditions and cultures of the peoples of kisiskâciwan (Saskatchewan). Grounded in the teachings of collaboration, cooperation, humility, reciprocity and sharing, the Centre aims to enhance First Nations, Métis, and Inuit student success.

The Centre's purpose is to facilitate the coordination of effective student services for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students and build relationships within and outside the University with Indigenous peoples. The Centre provides a home for Indigenous

undergraduate and graduate student leadership and allows for mutual learning opportunities for students and faculty. The Centre also functions as the University's hub for on-campus Indigenous engagement and initiatives.

The design of the Gordon Oakes Red Bear Student Centre was envisioned by Douglas Cardinal and RBM Architects. Cardinal is an internationally-renowned architect of Métis and Blackfoot heritage, and is a forerunner in philosophies of sustainability, green buildings and ecological design in community planning. Cardinal's architecture is inspired by his observations of nature and grounded

within his cultural beliefs.

The man that the building was named after, Gordon Oakes Red Bear was a spiritual and community leader who guided many in his community and across kisiskâciwan (Saskatchewan). He was born in 1932, in what is now the Nekaneet First Nation, and passed away in early 2002. Oakes believed in Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples working together for each other's mutual benefit, using the analogy of a team of horses pulling together and living in balance to impart this teaching. Because he held a strong belief in education and honouring one's culture and traditions, this building is named in his memory.

# tokiya oonyanpi he? / udókina he? / ahndi eazang? taanday itoohtayaahk? / tāntē ōma ē itohtēyahk? where are we going?

The University of Saskatchewan's Strategic Plan (University Plan 2025) has defined a bold new ambition to become the University the world needs. As part of this aspiration, USask has renewed its commitment to Indigenous peoples and communities that have always been integral to the University's history, evolution and future.

The University Plan 2025 weaves together commitments, goals, principles and values that aspire to advance Indigenization and support transformative decolonization leading to reconciliation. Through this commitment, the University of Saskatchewan seeks to embrace and embody the essence of the Indigenous name bestowed upon its strategy: *nikānītān manācihitowinihk* (Cree) | *ni manachihitoonaan* (Michif), which means "Let us lead with respect".

A number of wise practices have been implemented over the years to realize USask's commitment to Indigenous peoples through research, teaching and community engagement efforts, in particular those that highlight the importance of land- and place-based education. Many of these efforts have

involved Indigenous community organizations, cultural centres, student bodies, staff and faculty—spearheading efforts or partnering on initiatives to advance Indigenization. It is important to identify and recognize these efforts and successes within our units, departments, colleges and the University as we look to the future. For instance:<sup>2</sup>

- Through the work of Indigenous community and cultural centres, the creation of the Indian Teacher Education Program, the largest First Nations-specific program in Canada that has served over 16 First Nations communities/partners since 1974.
- Formation of the Indigenous Law Centre (formerly the Native Law Centre) to facilitate access to legal education and information for Indigenous peoples and promote the evolution of the Canadian legal system to better accommodate Indigenous peoples and communities.
- Establishment of the Rawlinson Centre for Aboriginal Business Students, one of the only such dedicated spaces for Aboriginal business students in the country.

- Development of Indigenous-led/ focused research and education initiatives and programs.
- Concerted efforts to elevate the proportion of Indigenous students and faculty.
- Creation of committees to address topics of relevance to Indigenous students, staff, faculty and leaders (including racism and oppression).

While these—and other—wise practices are evident, a more strategic and sustained collaborative effort needs to be made in the future to realize the full potential of the University's renewed commitment and aspiration to Indigenization outlined in its strategic plan. **This Indigenous Strategy is intended to unite with the University Plan 2025 and inspire meaningful and respectful action to advance Indigenization and support transformative decolonization leading to reconciliation.** This strategy is a gift to the University that draws upon the wisdom, knowledge, cultures, traditions, histories, lived experiences and stories of Indigenous peoples.

<sup>2</sup> Selected examples of wise practices only; a more comprehensive list of the University's activities and actions to advance Indigenization can be found in the Appendices.



**Indigenization, we can't do it without the land. We have to respect the land as if it were a teacher. It's not just a subject area. It has to be respected as a credit.**

**Traditional Knowledge Keeper Eugene Arcand**

Colonization has affected Indigenous communities and Indigenous peoples in numerous ways and to varying degrees (i.e., sixties scoop, residential schools, day schools, etc.); the effects of which have resulted in dispossession of land, language, and culture for many of our people. In an act of self-determination, this strategy was created by Indigenous peoples for the University of Saskatchewan. This strategy makes space for all and invites you into the circle.

**Our strategy is grounded in seven fundamental commitments**—interdependent, mutually reinforcing, interconnected in time and space. These commitments reflect important concepts to Indigenous peoples, our ways of knowing and being. These commitments are central to the wholeness of Indigenous self-determination:

- ✓ **Safety.** Creating and realizing inviting, welcoming and safe spaces for Indigenous peoples, free from racism and oppression.
- ✓ **Wellness.** Integrating wholistic healing supports for the University's

Indigenous community, including students, staff, faculty and leaders.

- ✓ **Stewardship.** Preserving and amplifying Indigenous cultures, languages and protocol learnings.
- ✓ **Representation.** Uplifting Indigenous peoples in University spaces and places.
- ✓ **Right Relations.** Supporting active and respectful partnerships and engagement with Indigenous peoples—ethical and relational spaces.
- ✓ **Creation.** Acknowledging, resourcing and investing in wise practices and activities—conjuring the creative spirit that inspires innovation.
- ✓ **Renewal.** Strengthening and sustaining pathways of access and success—connecting with Indigenous youth.

Below, we expand on the seven commitments central to this Indigenous Strategy. We describe the **Guiding Principles** that reflect the beliefs, values and philosophies that underpin each of our commitments. Importantly, we empower the University to deliver on its commitment to Indigenization, decolonization and reconciliation through concrete **Calls to Action** that reflect the voices and aspirations of Indigenous students, faculty, staff, and members of broader Indigenous communities. Finally, we have identified a series of **Markers** that can serve as guideposts for the University to better understand the impact of implementing these actions, help monitor and evaluate progress, and ensure accountability. **Just as We Are All Treaty People, we are all responsible for bringing life to this Strategy and applying its Guiding Principles, Calls to Action and Markers across the diverse USask community.**

**We are all in this together.**

### **Guiding Principles:**

**“Nothing about us, without us” as an antidote to exclusion.** Indigenous inclusion and voices are key to matters that relate to Indigenous peoples.

**Belonging as a healing practice.** Creating a sense of belonging is to communicate and demonstrate appreciation and value, and to build relationships that are restorative, reciprocal and caring.

**Allyship as a demonstration of humility.** Allyship is a lifelong process of building relationships that are based on trust, compassion, and respect. It is grounded in action, in commitment, and in enduring leadership. It is not paternalistic or tokenistic. Allies actively engage in and advocate for decolonization; they take the lead from Indigenous peoples.

# SAFETY

## Creating and realizing inviting, welcoming and safe spaces for Indigenous peoples, free from racism and oppression.

Settler colonialism brought with it historic violence, racism, and a significant impact on the safety and wellbeing of Indigenous peoples. Racism and oppression still exist—both within our communities and beyond. It is evident in the overt or covert actions (e.g., microaggressions) and words of people, and evident in the policies that

determine how we interact with each other. On their website, the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission notes: “[Racism] attacks an individual’s dignity. It is demeaning and debilitating. Having to live and work in an environment of overt or covert discrimination can cause victims to suffer a range of physical and mental health prob-

lems. Racism is hurtful behaviour that can scar people for life”. Racism and oppression inhibit meaningful learning and relationships between people, undermine belonging, and challenge the journey of self-determination for Indigenous peoples.

### CALLS TO ACTION

- ➔ Promoting system-wide learning for students, staff, faculty and leaders focused on embedding principles of anti-racism and anti-oppression across the University/community (e.g., through curricula, educational resources, anti-racism campaigns, cultural awareness, and unconscious bias training that is developed with and approved by Indigenous peoples).
- ➔ Developing and implementing systems (e.g., organizational models and frameworks, clear policies, procedures and practices) to confront and address racism and discrimination, and to do so in a safe, protective and constructive manner.
- ➔ Establishing standards (e.g., annual performance review measures) and support systems (e.g., well-
- ness networks) that address the unique complexities of providing anti-racism and anti-oppression education.
- ➔ Creating and/or facilitating access to support services (e.g., Indigenous Ombudsman, Indigenous counselors, ‘caring’ and protective processes of disclosure) and safe spaces for Indigenous students, staff, faculty and leaders who have faced or are facing racism and discrimination.
- ➔ Creating mechanisms, processes, systems, and external partnerships to support Indigenous faculty in the identification of barriers and/or racism (e.g., by creating an Indigenous Observer role to represent faculty rights).

### MARKERS

- ✓ A deep understanding of the challenging realities experienced by many Indigenous peoples as a result of discriminatory laws and policies by non-Indigenous peoples on campus.
- ✓ Growth in the relevance, breadth and number of student/staff/faculty support services focused on addressing racism and oppression.
- ✓ Increase in the number of educational/training resources and opportunities focused on racism and oppression.
- ✓ Increase in the number of allies—people that are supported by an Indigenous student, staff, faculty member and/or leader for demonstrated allyship.
- ✓ Greater comfort and confidence in the ability to report incidents of racism and oppression against Indigenous peoples.
- ✓ Increase in the number of policies and practices that are congruent with Universities Canada and the University of Saskatchewan’s Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) principles.

### **Guiding Principles:**

**Wholistic wellness as self-determination.** For Indigenous peoples, wellness embodies intellectual, physical, emotional and spiritual health; wholistic balance leads to strong expressions of and impact on political, economic, social and cultural determination.

# WELLNESS

## Integrating wholistic healing supports for the University's Indigenous community, including students, staff, faculty and leaders.

Today, the University of Saskatchewan has the privilege of learning from Indigenous leaders, faculty, staff and students. As of March 31, 2021, we had 50 Indigenous scholars and instructors, and 157 Indigenous staff/administrative support.<sup>3</sup> Indigenous students continue to grace the University's

campus. In the 2020/2021 academic year we had 3,466 Indigenous students enrolled at USask.<sup>4</sup> With a growing Indigenous population at USask, what do we know about the current realities of Indigenous peoples in Saskatchewan, realities that would directly affect learning, teaching, experiences, and overall wellness

of Indigenous peoples on campus? Do our systems and policies support Indigenous health and wellness practices that are culturally specific? For many Indigenous peoples, wellness embodies intellectual, physical, emotional and spiritual care, and this balance will lead to forms of self-determination.

### CALLS TO ACTION

- Developing culturally appropriate/sensitive health and wellness resources and supports for Indigenous students, staff, faculty and leaders (i.e., access to Indigenous counselors, physicians, therapists, as well as traditional Indigenous approaches and the establishment of an Indigenous Wellness Team).
- Facilitating knowledge of and access to broader wholistic wellness resources and supports for Indigenous students, staff, faculty and leaders (e.g., partnering with the City of Saskatoon to familiarize individuals to the campus and city—childcare, counseling services, housing, recreation, transportation, financial resources and supports).
- Implementation of culturally sensitive and appropriate retention, induction, orientation, and mentorship experiences for Indigenous students, staff, faculty and leaders that are responsive to their unique experiences.
- Ensuring that Indigenous faculty members have opportunities to network, gather, and learn together and have access to Indigenous mentors and advocates.

### MARKERS

- ✓ Greater integration of and access to diverse, culturally relevant, and alternative health and wellness resources and supports across the University.
- ✓ Improvement in the experiences and efficacy of new Indigenous students, staff, faculty and leaders—experiences that foster a strong sense of belonging.
- ✓ Collective Agreements that are inclusive of Indigenous peoples' traditional forms of health and wellness.
- ✓ Increase in the number of Indigenous mentors for Indigenous faculty.

<sup>3</sup> The University recognizes Indigenous people as those who self-identify as First Nations, Métis or Inuit. All data gathered on Indigenous representation is based on voluntary self-declaration, which can be completed any time post-hire. It is important to note that USask's workforce may have better representation than the statistics indicate.

<sup>4</sup> Preliminary 2020/21 Academic Year.

### **Guiding Principles:**

**Ceremony as sanctification.** Ceremony evokes a spiritual connection to the Creator, humanity (past, present and future), all creation and cosmos—to All my Relations. Appropriate protocols are carefully and mindfully practiced with great humility and respect.

**Land as first teacher.** Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing come directly from the time immemorial relationship with the first teacher—the land. Cultural philosophies, traditions, practices and languages are a reflection of this intimate relationship.

**Language as expression of life.** Indigenous languages are action-oriented, they are fluid, and they capture the inextricable, interconnected relationship with the land—the source of all life.

# STEWARDSHIP

## Preserving and amplifying Indigenous cultures, languages and protocol learnings.

Indigenous peoples—Métis, First Nations, and Inuit—on Turtle Island and its unique ecosystems and territories are diverse and rich in knowledges that are reflected in cultures, languages, traditions, protocols, practices, and histories that have evolved over thousands of years, primarily reflected by the relationship with the land and specific

ecosystems that constituted territories. According to the 2016 Statistics Canada census, the Indigenous population is growing—1,673,785 peoples, representing 4.9% of the overall Canadian population and 16% of Saskatchewan's population. Tremendous diversity exists across Métis, First Nation, and Inuit peoples, and this is captured within and unfolds

through our languages. There are over 60 distinct Indigenous languages across Canada that fall within 12 language families. In Saskatchewan, the languages that are predominately evident are Plains Cree, Woodland Cree, Swampy Cree, Dene, Dakota, Lakota, Nakota, Saulteaux, and Michif.

### CALLS TO ACTION

- ➔ Embracing diversity through the approaches used to offer teachings on Indigenous cultures, languages and protocols (e.g., integrating practices in kinesthetic, multi-sensory, experiential teaching of Saskatchewan's primary Indigenous languages; utilizing teachers who are fluent in these languages; teaching land-and place-based education physically out on the land and certifying students on the land).
- ➔ Establishing a Centre of Excellence for Indigenous Languages and Cultures, which will be a repository of Indigenous stories and languages and a space for Indigenous cultural and protocol learning and practice, and a space for gatherings connected to Indigenous teaching and research.
- ➔ Strengthening the integration of meaningful, Indigenous-led and developed content into University courses across programs, departments and colleges (e.g., on Indigenous laws about land).
- ➔ Establishing a dedicated multi-disciplinary degree program in Indigenous Sovereignty, Treaty and Inherent Rights.
- ➔ Supporting opportunities for multi-sensory and experiential education across the University and broader community (e.g., accredited land- and place-based learning; advocacy for Mother Earth; Indigenous oracy and storytelling approaches).
- ➔ Promoting capacity-building, skill and knowledge development in Indigenous histories and contemporary realities (challenges and successes) for non-Indigenous educators and leaders.
- ➔ Continuing to engage in processes that promote respect and reciprocity in partnerships and agreements (e.g., MOUs, research, program engagement and development) with Indigenous communities.

### MARKERS

- ✓ Growth in the number of Indigenous policies, programs, curricula and initiatives that focus on strengthening and implementing Indigenous cultures, languages and protocols across campus.
- ✓ Increase in the number of public presentations, performances and experiential cultural and language learning opportunities promoting Indigenous histories, traditions, and knowledges—Indigenous ways of being, doing, and knowing.
- ✓ Growth in the breadth and number of training/ educational opportunities incorporating Indigenous cultures, languages, traditions, protocols, practices, and histories.
- ✓ Growth in the number of Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars fluent (or knowledgeable) in Indigenous languages, cultures and traditions.
- ✓ Growth in the number of Indigenous and non-Indigenous student graduates across all subjects/ programs with an appreciation for, and understanding of, Indigenous histories and current Indigenous realities in Canada ('growth attributes' and competencies).
- ✓ Increase in the number of partnerships and agreements with Indigenous communities.

## **Guiding Principles:**

**Indigenous presence as validation.** Indigenous presence in all our spaces and places enriches and strengthens the USask community as a whole. Indigenous peoples will validate Indigenous strategies, programming, curricula, policies, and initiatives through their words and actions of affirmation.

**Teaching and learning as “coming to know”.** In many Indigenous languages, there is no word for schooling, and education is translated into ‘coming to know’. Coming to know is boundaryless, lifelong learning; it is fluid, active, and elicits heightened awareness and interaction with self and surroundings.

**Art and architecture as symbols of respecting and honouring seven generations.** Time is not linear, but circular, a spiral in fluid motion where the past, present and future are in a dynamic relationship within each moment. We learn from our ancestors, from stories and patterns seven generations into our past, so we understand our current reality and can plan for seven generations into the future. We honour All My Relations through expressions, including and beyond the written word.

**Indigenous ceremonies as community and identity/spirit builders.** Ceremony draws people together for reverent occasions and evokes the questions: Who am I/we? Where do I/we come from? Where am/are I/we going? What are my/our responsibilities? Ceremony asks all to be ‘sanctified kindness’. Increasing spaces for ceremony elevates USask to valuing the multifaceted journeys that students, staff, faculty and leaders bring to its spaces and places.



# REPRESENTATION

## Uplifting Indigenous peoples in University spaces and places.

Indigenous peoples have ways of being, knowing and doing that have been expressed in methodologies, pedagogies, stories, protocols, ceremonies, art, and architecture for thousands of years. Throughout kisiskâciwan (Saskatchewan), the vibrancy of the complexity, sophistication, intellect and thought—beauty—can be learned through respectful inquiry, seeking, and protocols. By being open to discovery, dreaming,

designing and a destiny (appreciative inquiry) that is meaningfully inclusive of Indigenous peoples, new learning and appreciation will be gained. What will one find?

- A place called Wanuskewin, where Indigenous peoples have visited for more than 6,000 years to gather food, strengthen social bonds, and practice ceremony.
- A medicine wheel near Moose Mountain that is 2,000+ years old; these sites signify a deep

understanding of the earth-sky relationship.

- A pictograph (rock art) documenting significant points in history, which can be found in northern Saskatchewan.
- Ancient and current sweat lodge frames dot the land, indicating the importance of wholistic, spiritual balance.
- Teachings that embody ‘all my relations’.

## CALLS TO ACTION

- Championing respectful practices that support the participation of Indigenous students, staff and faculty in traditional ceremonies.
- Promoting Indigenous storytelling and celebrating the success of Indigenous peoples through respectful dedications, remembrances and events across the University and broader community (e.g., art/architecture, imagery, naming of landmarks, streets, buildings and facilities, ceremonial spaces that pay homage to the land).
- Creating new Indigenous spaces for gatherings across the University and broader community (e.g., covered outdoor smudging bowl, sweat lodge, tipi ground).
- Allocating space and financial support to embedding local Indigenous artistry and cultural expressions across University spaces (e.g., dedicated funding envelope for the purchases of Indigenous art).
- Implementing focused efforts to recruit and retain Indigenous students, staff, faculty and leaders (including those who are known for their expertise of the land).
- Acknowledging the role of Indigenous faculty members’ research, body of work, and global reputation in benefiting the University in multiple and diverse ways (e.g., attracting Indigenous faculty, staff, and students).

## MARKERS

- ✓ Increase in the number of physical spaces that recognize Indigenous peoples, cultures and practices, demonstrating an interconnected and respectful community.
- ✓ Success in attracting and retaining Indigenous students, staff, faculty and leaders.
- ✓ Increase in the number of Indigenous leadership positions across the University.

### **Guiding Principles:**

**Respectful, reciprocal relationships as restoring, renewing, rejuvenating and (re)conciliating.** Healthy relationships are the foundation of all creation—they move individuals and organizations from simply surviving to thriving. We are encouraged to embrace *manācihitowin*, to strengthen the bonds of respect, trust and shared benefit. This is done by creating dynamic, inclusive spaces that encourage ethical relationality.

**Active and respectful communication with Indigenous peoples (on- and off-campus) as bridge- and Nation-building.** Quality, active and respectful, communication is a force that can connect, nurture, inspire, motivate, and heal. It can build bridges between people from diverse and disparate worldviews, bridges that can be pathways to stronger communities.

**Research as sacred.** Indigenous peoples have engaged in forms of research since time immemorial. Research begins with humility and respectful relationships, then engaging appropriate protocols, active listening and astute observation, oracy and storytelling. The sacredness and tremendous responsibility embedded in research is ever present.

**Systemic and structural transformation as valuing and uplifting Indigenous knowledges.** Creating innovative and bold solutions to barriers experienced by Indigenous peoples through radical systems and structural change demonstrates to Indigenous peoples a deep commitment.

# RIGHT RELATIONS

## Supporting active and respectful partnerships and engagement with Indigenous peoples—ethical and relational spaces.

Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island have always had complex forms of governance, social organizations, and economic systems, which were focused on sustainability. Treaties and trade agreements were secured between Indigenous peoples across this land. Large gatherings of diverse Indigenous populations formed for economic, social, entertainment, and ceremonial purposes. The spirit of these systems—the inspiring, exciting, masterful oration, dynamic negotiations, and sophisticated political interactions—are alive today. These forms of partnerships and engagement

practices have been challenged by colonial laws and mindsets that sought to dismiss, overpower, assimilate, and annihilate them, but they remain—providing insight into democracy, sustainability, and ‘right relations’.

Michael Coyle and Anishinaabe legal scholar John Borrows (2017) state that a question has to be asked and “tackled” in order to reconcile Indigenous and non-Indigenous relationships—“what is the right relationship...?” (p. 3). Coyle and Borrows look to the Treaty making process as a framework of relationships

based on right relations, as “the real importance of treaties was the relationship to which both sides had agreed” (p. 3). This strategy asks each one of us: what are we agreeing to?

Cree scholar Willie Ermine encourages Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples to lean into ethical spaces, which are ripe with creative possibility, if people agree to respectfully work together towards a common goal. *nikānitān manāchitowinihk* (Cree), *ni manachihitoonaan* (Michif), let us lead with respect (English).

### CALLS TO ACTION

- Committing to uplifting relationships through an engaging framework based on Right Relations and an active commitment to earn and nurture trust and faith in relationships, with Indigenous peoples, across the University.
- Adapting institutional protocols and foundational documents (e.g., those related to job promotion, academic tenureship) to recognize and reward work, service and merit that go beyond conventional job expectations and profiles (e.g., community and advocacy work).
- Establishing standards and guidelines for research ethics and intellectual properties that integrate Indigenous ways of knowing and research beyond OCAP<sup>5</sup> and TCPS 2—Chapter 9<sup>6</sup>.
- Enabling the inclusion and engagement of *kēhtē-ayak* (Elders) and Knowledge Keepers in research studies (e.g., community-based/led and methodological research) through institutional policies and practices (student *kēhtē-ayak* (Elders) ambassadors, increased *kēhtē-ayak* (Elders) parking near doors); being cognizant that academics and researchers can work with *kēhtē-ayak* (Elders) and Knowledge Keepers, but that their knowledge needs to be earned.
- Instituting mechanisms that will provide an open, transparent and welcoming bridge for Indigenous peoples into the University’s ecosystem (e.g., single point of access for information such as an integrated website).
- Developing policies and processes to support and empower Indigenous self-identification (e.g., when applying to programs, for scholarships) as well as monitor and enable access to information by relevant groups (e.g., Indigenous Student Council).
- Investing in short- and long-term resourcing (i.e., core support vs. soft financial commitments) to support Indigenization, decolonization and reconciliation initiatives.

<sup>5</sup> Ownership, control, access, and possession.

<sup>6</sup> Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada.

**Over these recent years the kēhtē-ayak (Elders) have worked tirelessly with graciousness and generosity to use their knowledge and wisdom for this Indigenous strategy. It is their hope that mutual sharing and the acquisition of western and Indigenous education will be a harmonious and beneficial undertaking. It is the responsibility for all those involved to take into consideration future generations and the respect of “all of our relations” when they consider how best to braid this strategy together.**

**kēhtē-aya (Elder) Louise Halfe, Sky Dancer**

## **RIGHT RELATIONS**

**Continued ...**

### **MARKERS**

- ➔ Ensuring that proper protocol training is a part of all research involving Indigenous peoples; respecting that traditional ceremony may be a part of the Indigenous research process.
- ✓ Increase in the number of Métis, First Nations, and Inuit agreements driven by Indigenous communities.
- ✓ Decolonized systems and structures—including those related to job promotion, academic tenure, and the recognition of work, service and merit—that support and recognize Indigenization, reconciliation, and Indigenous knowledges and scholarship.
- ✓ Increase in the confidential sharing of Indigenous information (e.g., self-identification) with University groups that support Indigenous peoples.
- ✓ Increase in the integration of Indigenous content on traditional (e.g., print, film, television) and digital media.
- ✓ Increase in resource support (e.g., financial, accounting) and visible acts of appreciation towards Indigenous cultures, learnings, practices and protocols.
- ✓ Increase in the number of research studies respectfully conducted and published in collaboration with kēhtē-ayak (Elders) and Traditional Knowledge Keepers.
- ✓ Update approval processes to enable self-identified Indigenous students to choose to have their Indigenous identification information shared across campus (engage and communicate with Indigenous student groups more frequently).

### **Guiding Principles:**

**Creativity as life giving.** Ethical spaces are ripe with creative possibility—possibilities become endless when people respectfully work together towards common goals. Creativity, the gatekeeper to innovation, is animate and spirit. Through nihtāwihcikēwin (Cree), nihtaoshchikaywin (Michif), creativity explores, pushes boundaries, and is brought to life by synergies, multi-sensory, multi-reality experiences; it invites individuals to courageously participate in a collective journey to new and unfamiliar lands, spaces and places, uncovering and proclaiming truths that will enrich life—and for Indigenous peoples today, survivance.

**Wise Practices as affirmation.** The creative spirit leads to wise practices that recognize and uplift the wisdom that resides in Indigenous communities. Wise practices affirm Indigenous cultures, traditions and stories.

# CREATION

**Acknowledging, resourcing and investing in wise practices and activities—conjuring the creative spirit that inspires innovation.**

Tewa Pueblo scholar Dr. Gregory Cajete teaches that “Native Science is a reflection of creative participation, a dance with chaos and her child, the creative spirit” (1999, p. 19). Creativity is animate. The University Plan 2025 recognizes creativity as a principle—nihtāwihcikēwin (Cree), nihtaoshchikaywin (Michif). The plan reads, “At its core, our University is a creative organism. The principle of creativity testifies that we are curious about the unexplored possibilities for growth, enrichment, and justice

around us; attentive to the needs and opportunities for change that inspire imagination and invention; and intentional about the future to which we aspire to contribute. The creative spirit is experiential; it invites participation in individual and collective journeys to discover truth and seek balance within the chaotic dynamism of the universe. nihtāwihcikēwin / nihtaoshchikaywin requires both discipline and optimism—knowing that our efforts can bring to fruition the possibilities

we envision for learning and discovery.”

Working with the Creative spirit should engage wise practices. Cree thought-leader Brian Calliou explains that “wise practices recognize the wisdom in each Indigenous community and their own stories of achieving success. It recognizes that culture [and identity] matters”.<sup>7</sup> Where does our wisdom lie? How are we acknowledging, celebrating, resourcing work that is ‘done in a good way’?

## CALLS TO ACTION

- Continued support for wise practices (e.g., Graduation Powwow, Indigenous programming [e.g., ITEP, SUNTEP, wicēhtowin], Aboriginal Student Centre, Sharing Circles, Indigenous advisors, staff, faculty and leaders).
- Ongoing creative, innovative, culturally responsive forms of programming and evaluation for Indigenous students, staff, faculty and leaders.
- Adapting existing or creating new financial mechanisms to recognize and reward Indigenous research, scholarship and unique forms of engagement and dissemination by departments, colleges and units (e.g., adjusting the transparent, activity-based budget system [TABBS] model to include an Indigenization bin).

## MARKERS

- ✓ The University of Saskatchewan is recognized by Indigenous students, faculty, staff and leaders at USask and other universities globally as an organization that shifts or changes age-old systems and structures to be responsive and strengthened by Indigenous knowledges through the weave metaphor.
- ✓ Increase in the number of Indigenous storytelling about activities and accomplishments across varied platforms (e.g., event presentations, print, digital).
- ✓ Implementation of University standards that are respectful of Indigenous knowledges, languages and scholarship.

<sup>7</sup> [ccednet-rcdec.ca/sites/ccednet-rcdec.ca/files/wise\\_practices\\_in\\_indigenous\\_community\\_economic\\_development.pdf](https://ccednet-rcdec.ca/sites/ccednet-rcdec.ca/files/wise_practices_in_indigenous_community_economic_development.pdf)

**We're looking at changing the tune  
that we sing together.**

**Michelle Whitstone  
PhD Candidate, Educational Administration**

**Guiding Principles:**

**Indigenous youth as our strength, our hope, our future.** Indigenous peoples recognize that our youth are humanity's most sacred gift, so we collectively work to nurture and support them—see each child as our own—by actively listening, being keenly aware, and astutely observing and responding to their verbal and non-verbal communication. What are their stories? What are their destinies? Our youth hold the future in their hands, they are a promise to those children not yet born seven generations into the future. Our hope is that they walk past us to deeper forms of self-determination. What is good for Indigenous youth is good for all!

# RENEWAL

## Strengthening and sustaining pathways of access and success—connecting with Indigenous youth.

In 2016, Statistics Canada reported that the average age of the Indigenous population in Saskatchewan was 28.2 years, while the non-Indigenous population was 40.6 years. At present, Indigenous children aged 14 and under represent 33% of the total

Indigenous population, while for the non-Indigenous population it is 17.4%. The Indigenous population is youthful and abundant. USask has an opportunity to nurture the development of this significant and important population, even before

they enter post-secondary education. As our Indigenous youth transition to post-secondary students, there are continued opportunities to strengthen the integration, involvement and success of our future generations across the University community.

### CALLS TO ACTION

- Cultivating leadership experiences for Indigenous students and youth by developing and strengthening mentorship programming for Indigenous students on- and off-campus (e.g., in-person and virtual peer-mentorship for Indigenous students; College prep institutions and University mentorship programs for Indigenous high school students).
- Evaluating and adjusting institutional programs, policies and curricula (where appropriate) to be responsive, current and innovative for Indigenous students (e.g., elimination of registration fees, e-learning).
- Creating an environment for Indigenous students and youth to learn while retaining (or reconnecting with) their cultural identity through land- and place-based learning and interactions with kēhtē-ayak (Elders), such as student kēhtē-ayak (Elders) ambassadors.
- Examining, improving and evaluating systems of accessibility and pathways for post-secondary entrance for Indigenous youth.

### MARKERS

- ✓ Growth in Indigenous student enrollment, retention, and graduation across diverse departments/colleges at the University.
- ✓ Growth in the number of overall student applications to the University.
- ✓ Growth in Indigenous student enrolment and retention in graduate, postgraduate and professional programs.
- ✓ Growth in membership of the Indigenous Student Council.
- ✓ Growth in the number of partnerships/collaborations established between the Indigenous Student Council and other student bodies.



**... the idea of the ethical space, produced by contrasting perspectives of the world, entertains the notion of a meeting place, or initial thinking about a neutral zone between entities or cultures. The space offers a venue to step out of our allegiances, to detach from the cages of our mental worlds and assume a position where human-to-human dialogue can occur. The ethical space offers itself as the theatre from cross-cultural conversation in pursuit of ethically engaging diversity and disperses claims to the human order.**

**Cree Scholar Willie Ermine  
*Indigenous Law Journal* (2007)**

**Everyone who is here [at the University] has a responsibility to learn [about Indigenization], and they have a responsibility to use this knowledge. [Non-Indigenous people] put a big weight on our shoulders as Indigenous people to teach... [the] Indigenization movement is often placed on our shoulders as Indigenous people, but that's not ours to carry.**

**Faculty and Staff Forum, January 31st, 2019**

ëdłaghë nùhlaʔa? / taku hec'eh cwac'amin?  
wozuye dāgu he? / wayganayn tsi dotamang?  
kaykwy chi tootamaahk? / kīkwaya ōhi kā wī itasihkamahk?  
what are our responsibilities?

We all have a responsibility—both individually and collectively—to support the work of reconciliation, redress past wrongs, mend and heal broken relationships between Indigenous peoples and Canadian educational institutions, and lay the foundation for our shared future. This responsibility is rooted in acknowledging and understanding the sophistication and complexity of Indigenous histories, knowledges, cultures, teachings, practices, and philosophies, and ensuring that this richness and di-

versity remains interwoven within the fabric of the University's and broader community's research, learning and engagement efforts. We are all responsible to the seven generations that came before us and the seven generations yet to come; to all our relations; and to sharing the truths that are embedded within our stories. **Rooted in the principles of respect, responsibility, reciprocity and sustainability, we look forward to working hand-in-hand with the University of Saskatchewan**

**to build on its commitment and aspiration for Indigenization and its Wise Practices in order to bring this strategy to life.**

The Calls to Action and Markers provide a powerful framework for translating our Commitments into impact, but the success of our collective efforts will ultimately be measured against a future in which the following principles and practices are embedded within our mindset and behaviours:

- The relationship between Indigenous peoples and all Canadians is based on the principles of recognition, respect, sharing and mutual responsibility.
- The stories told will be vastly different—embedded with possibility, hope and strength.
- Indigenous knowledges live in Indigenous languages, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers with teachings of the land and nature, and can be accessed respectfully through formal, informal, and nonformal learning programming, curricula, and practices.
- There is an increased understanding of the terms Indigenization, decolonization and reconciliation across all members of the University, and greater integration into current administrative structures.
- Indigenous leadership is secured in governance structures—role models for everyone are evident and commonplace, at all levels.
- Learning and relationships are richer because of Indigenous methodologies and pedagogies.
- “Why?” is replaced with “When?” and “Now what?”
- Our children anticipate the University experience and look forward to being agents of change.
- The University of Saskatchewan is a place and space of transformation and great influence (teachers, artists, lawyers, nurses, doctors, engineers, scientists, entrepreneurs), and will be known as the epicenter of Indigenization and Reconciliation.

# INDIGENOUS STRATEGY TIMELINE

engagement  
validation  
dissemination

## 2018

### ENGAGEMENT ADVICE AND GUIDANCE MEETINGS WITH INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

#### APRIL

- 17<sup>TH</sup>** Indigenous Strategy Proposal, Presentation to Senior Leaders Forum – Saskatoon Inn, Saskatoon

#### NOVEMBER

- 1<sup>ST</sup>** Engagement, Advice and Guidance Meeting with Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers – Holiday Inn Express, Saskatoon
- 29<sup>TH</sup>** Engagement, Advice and Guidance Meeting with Indigenous Community and Organizations – Wanuskewin Heritage Park, Saskatoon

## 2019

### ENGAGEMENT ADVICE AND GUIDANCE MEETINGS WITH INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES CONTINUES

#### JANUARY

- 30<sup>TH</sup>** Morning: Engagement, Advice and Guidance Meeting with Indigenous Undergraduate Students – Green Room, Administration Building, USask
- 30<sup>TH</sup>** Afternoon: Engagement, Advice and Guidance Meeting with Indigenous Graduate Students – Green Room, Administration Building, USask
- 31<sup>ST</sup>** Morning: Engagement, Advice and Guidance Meeting with Indigenous staff– Green Room, Administration Building, USask
- 31<sup>ST</sup>** Afternoon: Engagement, Advice and Guidance Meeting with Indigenous faculty– Green Room, Administration Building, USask

#### MARCH

- 7<sup>TH</sup>** Engagement, Advice and Guidance Meeting with Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers – Holiday Inn Express, Saskatoon

#### APRIL

- 2<sup>ND</sup>** Engagement, Advice and Guidance Meeting with Indigenous undergraduate students – College of Education Building, USask
- 4<sup>TH</sup>** Engagement, Advice and Guidance Meeting with Indigenous undergraduate students – Health Sciences Building, USask
- 5<sup>TH</sup>** Engagement, Advice and Guidance Meeting with Indigenous undergraduate students – Arts and Science Building, USask

#### MAY

- 30<sup>TH</sup>** Engagement, Advice and Guidance Meeting with Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers – Parktown Hotel, Saskatoon

#### OCTOBER

- Indigenous Strategy Draft Development

# 2020

## PRESENTATION OF DRAFT INDIGENOUS STRATEGY AND VALIDATION SESSIONS WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

### MARCH

- 31<sup>ST</sup>** Presentation of draft Indigenous Strategy and Validation Sessions with Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers cancelled due to COVID 19

### APRIL

- 7<sup>TH</sup>** Presentation of draft Indigenous Strategy and Validation Sessions with Indigenous Undergraduate and Graduate students – Zoom Meeting Room  
  
Presentation of draft Indigenous Strategy and Validation Sessions with Indigenous Undergraduate and Graduate students – Zoom Meeting Room
- 8<sup>TH</sup>** Planning and Priorities Committee  
  
Presentation of draft Indigenous Strategy and Validation Sessions with Indigenous staff – Zoom Meeting Room  
  
Presentation of draft Indigenous Strategy and Validation Sessions with Indigenous faculty – Zoom Meeting Room
- 9<sup>TH</sup>** Presentation of draft Indigenous Strategy and Validation Sessions with Indigenous faculty – Zoom Meeting Room  
  
Presentation of draft Indigenous Strategy and Validation Sessions with Indigenous staff– Zoom Meeting Room  
  
Presentation of draft Indigenous Strategy and Validation Sessions with Indigenous Undergraduate and Graduate students – Zoom Meeting Room  
  
Presentation of draft Indigenous Strategy and Validation Sessions with Indigenous Undergraduate and Graduate students – Zoom Meeting Room

### MAY

- 6<sup>TH</sup>** Meeting with Elders, Traditional Knowledge Keepers, Language Keepers – Naming, Advice/ Guidance on ceremonial aspects of strategy launch
- 7<sup>TH</sup>** Indigenous Strategy presentation to University of Saskatchewan – Presidents Executive Committee
- 12<sup>TH</sup>** Indigenous Strategy presentation to University of Saskatchewan Deans Council
- 12<sup>TH</sup>** Indigenous Strategy presentation to University of Saskatchewan – Finance and Resources AVP/Directors
- 13<sup>TH</sup>** Indigenous Strategy presentation to Presidents Executive Council – Council Chairs
- 21<sup>ST</sup>** Indigenous Strategy presentation to University of Saskatchewan University Council
- 25<sup>TH</sup>** Indigenous Strategy presentation to University of Saskatchewan Provosts Advisory Committee
- 26<sup>TH</sup>** Indigenous Strategy presentation to University of Saskatchewan Teaching, Learning, and Academic Resources Committee of Council

### JUNE

- 18<sup>TH</sup>** Indigenous Strategy presentation to University of Saskatchewan University Council
- 19<sup>TH</sup>** Indigenous Strategy presentation to University of Saskatchewan Alumni Advisory Board

### JULY

- 7<sup>TH</sup>** Indigenous Strategy presentation to University of Saskatchewan Board of Governors

### OCTOBER

- 18<sup>TH</sup>** University of Saskatchewan Senate (motion to accept gift)

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Antiracism** is a study and theory about systems of power and how it is enacted, naturalized and invisible to those with power across classifications of race, class, gender expression and sexual identities, and abilities that diminish and subject groups to oppression. The awareness of power and contributing ideologies that hold power is what antiracism helps to uncover for both the empowered elite groups and the disempowered or oppressed groups. It is needed for everyone to unlock, unpack and deconstruct those ideas, ideologies, and limitations on society.

**Decolonization** practices contest divisive and demeaning actions, policies, programming, and frameworks. Indigenization is the healing, balancing force; it calls us to action, inspires opportunities for mutual cultural understanding, and helps us to find comfort in the discomfort decolonization can entail.

**Ethical spaces** arise when competing worldviews or 'disparate systems' come together for 'engagement' purposes. The connecting space, the overlapping space between the groups is the binding ethical space. Cree Scholar Willie Ermine, notes that the convergence of these groups "can become a refuge of possibility in cross-cultural relations ... The new partnership model of the ethical space, in a cooperative spirit between Indigenous peoples and Western institutions, will create new currents of thoughts

that flow in different directions and overrun the old ways of thinking" (Indigenous Law Journal, 2007, 6:202-203).

**Indigenization** challenges us to amplify the forces of decolonization. Indigenization strengthens the fabric of the University. It involves the respectful, meaningful, ethical weaving of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit knowledges, lived experiences, worldviews, and stories into teaching, learning, and research. Indigenization is a gift that benefits every member of our community.

**Microaggression** a comment or action that subtly and often unconsciously or unintentionally expresses a prejudiced attitude toward a member of a marginalized group (such as a racial minority)<sup>8</sup> (e.g., You don't look Indigenous.)

**Reconciliation** is a goal that may take generations to realize. It "is about forging and maintaining respectful relationships. There are no shortcuts" (Senator Murray Sinclair, Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission). As a community, we have a shared responsibility to honour and join in the journey of reconciliation; to repair, redress and heal relationships; and nurture an ethical space in which we can explore how we relate to each other through the lenses of history, culture, and lived experience.

**Settler colonialism**<sup>9</sup> is a term that is used to describe the history and ongoing processes/structures

whereby one group of people (settlers) are brought in to replace an existing Indigenous population, usually as part of imperial projects. Settler colonialism can be distinguished from other forms of colonialism by the following characteristics:

1. Settlers intend to permanently occupy, and assert their sovereignty, over Indigenous lands.
2. This invasion is structural rather than a single event, designed to ensure the elimination of Indigenous populations and control of their lands through the imposition of a new governmental/legal system.
3. The goal of settler colonialism is to eliminate colonial difference by eliminating Indigenous peoples, thereby establishing settler right to Indigenous lands.

Though often assumed to be a historical process, settler colonialism as a project is always partial, unfinished, and in-progress. Examples include Canada, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa.

**"Wholistic"** is a term that is used throughout this document and has been intentionally spelled with a "w" to represent the spiritual wholeness that defines Indigenous ways of being and gives life to this strategy.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/microaggression>

<sup>9</sup> [unwrittenhistories.com/imagining-a-better-future-an-introduction-to-teaching-and-learning-about-settler-colonialism-in-canada](http://unwrittenhistories.com/imagining-a-better-future-an-introduction-to-teaching-and-learning-about-settler-colonialism-in-canada)

# WISE PRACTICES—INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITIES

The following list presents additional examples of wise practices implemented by the University—in many cases, in collaboration with Indigenous community organizations, student bodies, staff and faculty—to realize its commitment to Indigenousization.

- Integration of Indigenous knowledges and experiences directly into the learning charter.
- Creation of an Indigenous Voices Program (through the Gwenna Moss Centre for Teaching and Learning) that is led by Indigenous leaders who are dedicated to creating a shared space for dialogue, learning, and collaborative action to catalyze individual and systemic change at USask related to Indigenousization, reconciliation, and decolonization.
- Establishment of an Indigenous Learning Activities Fund—a University-accessible fund to support student learning activities in the classroom or beyond that involves Indigenous *kēhtë-ayak* (Elders), Knowledge Keepers, and/or community leaders. This support is provided for Experiential Learning opportunities that engage learners purposefully in direct experience, focused reflection, and authentic assessment in order to increase knowledge, develop skills and strategies, clarify values, and apply prior learning.
- Creation of Experiential Learning Opportunities for Indigenous students or with Indigenous communities/organizations. The University of Saskatchewan has been a lead for the development of Experiential Indigenous programs and courses for over 50 years. For example, the University established the Indian and Northern Education Program in 1961, the Indian and Northern Curriculum Resources Centre in 1964, Cree language courses in 1968, and Native Law in 1973. Since then, our capacity and progress in supporting the Indigenous Peoples of Saskatchewan has grown extensively and resulted in the significant number of Indigenous faculty, staff, students, and community who are regularly consulted in our program and curriculum development and design. We use a combination of joint development with an Indigenous community or organization, joint delivery with an Indigenous post secondary institution, oversight or consultation with Indigenous Elders or Old Ones (which includes Knowledge Keepers and community leaders and organizations). Currently, we offer over 170 courses that focus on learning outcomes tied to Indigenous knowledge and experience grounded in Indigenous world views.
- Formation of Building Bridges, a partnership between the Aboriginal Students' Centre and the International Student and Study Abroad Centre that provides programming with a focus on Indigenous and international relations and cultural understanding.

# WISE PRACTICES—OVPIE

The following list presents additional examples of wise practices implemented by the Office of the Vice-Provost Indigenous Engagement (OVPIE).

- Development of an Oracy fund—a financial system that recognizes the cultural gifting aspects of Indigenous research.
- Integration of fundamental and systemic changes to Indigenize standards for promotion and tenure.
- Hosting of an annual Internal Truth and Reconciliation Forum for the USask community.
- Formation of a committee on Anti-racism and anti-oppression education and research.
- Establishment of MOUs with Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations, Prince Albert Grand Council, the Saskatoon Tribal Council, Canada Roots Exchange, and the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan.

## WISE PRACTICES—COLLEGES/UNITS

The following list presents additional examples of wise practices implemented by Colleges/Units—in many cases, in collaboration with Indigenous community organizations, student bodies, staff and faculty—to realize its commitment to Indigenousization.

### AGRICULTURE AND BIORESOURCES

- Creation of the Kanawayihetaytan Askiy (KA; let us take care of the land) Program, focused on providing a broad range of topic areas specific to the management of lands and resources (including examining basic environmental, legal and economic aspects of land and resource management in Indigenous communities).
- Creation of the Kanawayihetaytan Askiy Diploma in Indigenous Lands Governance (Indigenous Lands Governance Diploma) that provides students with a broad background in governance, management, administration and political science as they relate to Indigenous communities and has a strong focus on experiential learning.
- Creation of the Kanawayihetaytan Askiy Diploma in Indigenous Resource Management (Indigenous Resource Management Diploma) that provides a broad background in resource management for Indigenous communities. The diploma builds on the Kanawayihetaytan Askiy Certificate and prepares students to become land managers in their own communities and for leadership roles in local, provincial and national settings.
- Over \$160,000 in Connection Grants from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council for four USask researchers for projects aimed at revitalizing agriculture on Indigenous lands, fostering reconciliation, ensuring safe water supplies, and designing sustainable communities.

### ARTS AND SCIENCE

- Establishment of the Gabriel Dumont Chair in Métis Studies in April 2018, which will increase research and teaching capacity in Métis studies at USask and further develop academic engagement between the University and Gabriel Dumont Institute.
- Implementation of Indigenous Learning Requirements. In 2011, the College approved the following Learning Goal for all of its students: to cultivate an understanding and appreciation for the unique socio-cultural position of Indigenous peoples in Canada. Since the time the College has determined, with extensive consultation, that every Arts & Science undergraduate student must, by graduation, successfully complete three credit units from a diverse but carefully selected list of Indigenous Requirement courses. Criteria have been developed against which courses will be assessed to determine if they will qualify for fulfilling the Indigenous learning requirement. As of March 2019, nine courses were approved for the list.
- Concerted efforts to recruit Indigenous faculty, allocating up to 3 new faculty positions annually over the next 10 years to elevate the proportion of Indigenous faculty members to 15% (on par with population demographics).
- Creation of Indigenous Student Achievement Pathways (ISAP) to welcome Métis, First Nations and Inuit students to the College through academically-grounded programming that builds confidence, knowledge and skills, while connecting students to one another and to the campus community.
- Establishment of a senior leadership position—Vice-Dean, Indigenous, who is responsible for all matters relating to Indigenous engagement and direction over the development and implementation of Indigenous-related strategies.
- Facilitation of land-based experiential learning and historical knowledge transmission: Wanuskewin trip. In 2016, a class trip to Wanuskewin was implemented in INDG 262, Aboriginal Narratives of Historical Memory. The visit to Wanuskewin, supported by the Experiential Learning Fund, had the goal of grounding Indigenous histories

## APPENDICES

in histories of the land. The course, which relied heavily on Indigenous historians and story, allowed students to think deeply about place and memory. By firstly establishing the connection to land at Wanuskewin, the class together built together a respectful appreciation for Indigenous histories, and a critical understanding of place.

- Creation of Becoming Water: Collaborative Learning with Art and Science. The studio-based course, ART 356.3: Becoming Water, will provide students with the opportunity to consider water as subject matter and produce artwork in response. Emphasis will be on connecting water as an external and internal element (water in the river and

water in our bodies).

- Establishment of the Trish Monture Centre for Student Success—Indigenous Student Advising. The Trish Monture Centre provides students in both the Indigenous Student Achievement Pathways and the University Transition Program with academic advising and studying support. The program uses a holistic approach to advising that addresses the student as a whole person from a place of peace, friendship and respect.
- Creation of an Indigenous Studies PhD Program in September 2017.
- Establishment of degrees/ certificates with an Indigenous focus, including:

- ♦ Master and Doctoral Programs in Indigenous Studies;
- ♦ Bachelor of Arts – Indigenous Studies;
- ♦ Bachelor of Arts – Sociology—with a concentration in Indigenous Justice and Criminology (this program is only open to Indigenous students; intended to prepare Indigenous students for careers in corrections, public safety, advocacy, and other areas related to criminal or social justice);
- ♦ Certificate in Indigenous Governance and Politics;
- ♦ Certificate in Indigenous Languages; and
- ♦ Certificate in wicêhtowin Theatre.

## DENTISTRY

- The college is committed to recruiting applicants that reflect the cultural diversity of Saskatchewan's population and

is dedicated to increasing the success of Indigenous applicants who wish to obtain a dental education by allocating 11-14% of

available seats in the admission of Indigenous students.

## EDUCATION

- In partnership with the Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI), the creation of the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP), with the primary goal of ensuring Métis people are equitably represented in the teaching profession.
- Establishment of Onikaniwak: For Those Who Lead: Supporting Culturally Relevant Teaching, Learning and Leading Through Indigenous Perspectives. This study tour, supported by the Experiential Learning Fund, is situated in the boreal forest of Northern Manitoba on Opaskwayak Cree Nation

territory. The summer institute helps develop understanding and knowledge of Indigenous histories, worldviews and cultures by engaging students in a variety of experiences that are authentic, land and experience based. The learning institute focuses on developing leadership capacity to support educational outcomes of growing numbers of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students in educational contexts.

- Creation of the Indian Teacher Education Program (ITEP), which has been serving First Nations education since 1972 and is the largest First Nations-specific

teacher education program in the country.

- Establishment of Land-Based and Aboriginal Education Master's Cohorts. This Master of Education course based graduate program offers intensive land-based institutes where students take graduate level courses framed within an Indigenous paradigm.
- Continuation of a MEd with an Indigenous Land-Based Education concentration, Educational Foundations. Students learn Indigenous ethics of relationality and accountability with Indigenous



faculty by studying Indigenous approaches to land-based research, teaching and learning.

- Requirement for Reconciliation and Treaty Education. The College has created two courses, one of which will be required in year 2 for all BEd students. The courses will focus on the study of school purposes and practices, including teaching and learning processes, assessment, course content, and familial and community

relations. The intent of these courses is to provide teacher candidates with a deep appreciation for the knowledge, experiences and perspectives of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, students in their classrooms, as well as provide them with confidence and knowledge on how to incorporate First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives in curricula, instruction, and assessment. The College has created mandatory Treaty

training for all students in year 3 and has formally instituted the Office of the Treaty Commissioner 2-day Treaty Workshop training for all students in the Sequential program EDST 322 course.

- Offers a number of other longstanding and new certificate programs to assist current educators to deepen their knowledge in a chosen area, including the Certificate in Indigenous Languages.

## EDWARDS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

- Creation of an Aboriginal Business Administration Certificate (ABAC) that offers self-declared Métis, First Nations and Inuit students with a springboard to a

successful career in business and with the option to transfer into the Bachelor of Commerce degree program upon completion.

- Establishment of the Indigenous Business Students' Society (IBSS), focused on bringing Indigenous students together so there is a system of support.

## ENGINEERING

- Formation of the Indigenous Peoples' Initiatives Community (IPIC) Engineering Access Program to engage Indigenous students and facilitate access to

engineering professions.

- Formation of the Indigenous Resource Centre to offer support to aspiring Indigenous engineers and provide

educational opportunities for non-Indigenous students, staff and faculty.

## JOHNSON-SHOYAMA GRADUATE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY

- Formation of the Indigenous Peoples' Health Research Centre (IPHRC) to build capacity for community-based Indigenous health research in Saskatchewan, and create networks of Indigenous health researchers regionally, nationally, and internationally.
- Launch of Building Research Relationships with Indigenous Communities (BRRIC) training

modules for researchers and their teams seeking to engage Indigenous communities in research.

- Creation of an Indigenous Research and Engagement Expertise Platform (ongoing).
- Creation of a Joint Masters of Governance and Entrepreneurship in Northern and Indigenous Areas (GENI) designed to

prepare students in northern and Indigenous communities to take on leadership roles in supporting their communities with economic development by using innovative and entrepreneurial approaches.

- Creation of an Indigenous Leadership Program, in partnership with the First Nations University of Canada.

## APPENDICES

### KINESIOLOGY

- Development of one of Canada's first required undergraduate courses in Indigenous ways of knowing and understanding wellness – KIN 306: Introduction to Indigenous Wellness.
- \$120,000 in funding from the Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation (over three years) for Dr. Heather Foulds to assess the fitness potential of Métis jigging.
- Establishment of the *Youth Leadership Through Sport* program in partnership with the Saskatoon Tribal Council, providing Indigenous youth with the opportunity to “train like a Huskie”.

### LAW

- Establishment of the Indigenous Law Centre (formerly the Native Law Centre), which aims to facilitate access to legal education for Indigenous peoples, to promote the development of the law and the legal system in Canada in ways which better accommodate the advancement of Indigenous peoples and communities, and to disseminate information concerning Indigenous peoples and the law.
- Implementation of Indigenous Learning Requirements. The College requires that all students accepted into the program are required to take a first-year course and one of 12 upper-year courses or self-directed seminars for a total of 6 credits.
- Additional investments to enhance learning for Indigenous students, including: expanded credited transsystemic law course offerings, land-based learning opportunities, a graduate program, more traditional teachers involved in course delivery, web-based courses, as well as a focus for those students interested in becoming paralegals.

### MEDICINE

- Establishment of an Indigenous Admissions and Pathway into Medicine that has been one of the most successful across Canada, graduating 100 Indigenous medical students to date.
  - Development of a national research initiative addressing health disparities facing Indigenous communities—with the largest single investment in Indigenous health research in Canadian history (Network Environments for Indigenous Health Research). CIHR's Institute of Indigenous Peoples' Health is based at the University of Saskatchewan, as is a unique mentorship position—the Cameco Chair in Indigenous Health—designed to mentor a newly graduated practicing physician in research.
  - Commitment to enactment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.
- This includes curriculum development, electives in Indigenous Health, meaningful community engagement, including MOUs with several communities and ongoing commitment to research, education, public health and medical care including Northern Medical Services, a unique Division that is tripartite with Health Canada, Saskatchewan Ministry of Health and the University of Saskatchewan.

### NURSING

- Largest number of self-declared Indigenous nursing students in any nursing program in the country.
- Creation of the University of Saskatchewan Community of Aboriginal Nursing (UCAN) Program whereby Aboriginal nursing advisors in Saskatoon, Regina and Prince Albert work with students at all sites to build community, provide advice and support.

## PHARMACY AND NUTRITION

- Provides students a series of opportunities in various communities throughout Saskatchewan and beyond to gain hands-on experience and develop skills in cultural competency.
- Offers an education equity program to maintain and increase the number of Indigenous students in its programs.

## SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY

- Establishment of the UNESCO Chair in Biocultural Diversity, Sustainability, Reconciliation and Renewal, engaging in research in partnership and friendship with communities and Indigenous peoples in the areas of environmental stewardship and governance, community-engaged research practices, Indigenous food systems, and gender and youth in environmental management.

## SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

- Launch of six new co-led projects through Global Water Future—the world's largest University-led freshwater research program—that integrates Indigenous partners from across Canada to address urgent and growing water quality issues for Indigenous communities.

## VETERINARY MEDICINE

- Allocation of position in the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) Program for Indigenous students from British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and the territories (through the Education Equity Program).
- 4th year students at the WCVM are given two opportunities to participate in Community Engaged Service Learning in an Indigenous community in northern Saskatchewan. The approach aims to equip students with tools to demonstrate cultural humility and competence.

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