PRESENTED BY: Darrell Mousseau, chair, Planning and Priorities Committee of Council

DATE OF MEETING: June 18, 2020

SUBJECT: Acceptance of the Indigenous Engagement Strategy

DECISION REQUESTED:

(OTTMANN/MOUSSEAU) It is recommended that Council accept the “Indigenous Strategy.”

DISCUSSION SUMMARY:
The Planning and Priorities Committee (PPC) recommends the acceptance of the gift of the Indigenous Strategy, as attached.

On April 22, 2020 PPC received the draft Indigenous Engagement Strategy for review, and also considered it on May 2, 2020. On May 7, 2020, the draft strategy was presented to the President’s Executive Committee where a discussion about the appropriate protocols and process for moving the plan forward took place. Following this consultation, on May 12, 2020 PPC passed an electronic motion recommending the acceptance of the strategy. On May 13, 2020 at the President’s Executive Committee breakfast meeting with the Council Chairs, the strategy was also a topic of discussion.

This Indigenous Engagement Strategy is presented to University Council as a gift from the Indigenous community. Information regarding the process for its development is included in the attached document.

Changes that have been made since the last version (circulated for the May 21, 2020, meeting of University Council) are as follows:

1. Page 2: Canadian Constitution, Section 35 has been added;
2. Page 4: All the Elders, Traditional Knowledge Keepers, Language Teachers that contributed to the strategy have been listed;
3. Names on many of the quotes on the left have been added;
4. Page 9: “Our Connection to Land” has been added;
5. Page 15: Gordon Oakes Red Bear Student Centre story;
6. Page 39: Glossary of Terms is now completed;
7. Page 44: Appendix: Wise Practices – As suggested by the Elders, inclusion of more land-based initiatives and programs have been added.

On June 15, 2020, PPC voted (electronically) in favour of accepting these changes and presenting the document to University Council as a request for decision.

**NEXT STEPS:**
The document will be presented for acceptance to the Board of Governors at its early July 2020 meeting, and at the October 2020 Senate meeting.

**ATTACHMENT:**
1. *Indigenous Strategy*
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 Nation 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.
Section 35 of the Constitution Act

(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.
It is an honour to gift this strategy to the University of Saskatchewan on behalf of the Indigenous peoples who created it.

This strategy uplifts Indigenous voices. It presents our stories. It honours seven generations of our ancestors and seven generations of our children not yet born. As an act of self-determination, this strategy expresses the creativity, the aspirations and the expectations of Indigenous peoples. It testifies. It teaches. It guides.

This strategy is a gift to non-Indigenous peoples. We are indebted to the generosity of Indigenous peoples across Saskatchewan who dedicated such care and effort in creating this document. We are hopeful the university community, in accepting this gift, will dedicate reciprocal care and effort in embracing the responsibilities this gift entails.

This strategy invites non-Indigenous peoples to walk with us and celebrate the harmony of parallel journeys. As the Indigenous Strategy for the University of Saskatchewan, this document is a companion to the University Plan 2025, shining a light on the university’s reconciliation journey and helping to pave paths for Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples alike to work collaboratively and willingly to reach a shared destination. The presentation of this document also reflects parallel journeys: the left
kehē-ayak (Elders) and Traditional Knowledge Keepers

- 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
- Jacob Pete
- 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)
- Kelvin Dale Mckay (Dakota)
- Randy Morin (Cree)
- Rosalie Tsannie-Burseth (Dene)
On behalf of the University of Saskatchewan, I accept the gift of this strategy with profound gratitude, respect and hope.

I am proud to lead a university with the humility to embrace the responsibility 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 níkánítan manácihitowiníhk | ní 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, with and for Indigenous peoples. 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
Strategy Through Indigenous Perspectives

I have strong hopes that the work done to date is not done for nothing, that this office 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 the U of Sask; 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!

Wendell Starblanket

Strategy as Gift. We gift this strategy to the University of Saskatchewan. Indigenous peoples from the city of misâskwatahômina (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 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 acknowledgement 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 peoples, this strategy’s voice represents Indigenous 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?
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., Constitutional 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”, 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.

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. Throughout this document, we have employed the double helix as a visual metaphor. The double helix is dynamic and resilient. Continuous and non-linear. Each strand is defined by a single, unbroken line, but the path is not singular: together, the strands can stretch or compress like a coil; they can spin around each other clockwise toward the future or be reset in the opposite direction. But despite these forces, despite this change, the helix remains whole. A helix embodies the collision of chaos and order at the heart of creativity. A helix helps us to imagine the connections across space and across generations whose integrity is central to the wholeness of Indigenous self-determination.

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 it.
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 languages 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.

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 kēhte-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.

ëdlaghįʔat’įʔa? ounitoushepi he? dukwehi he? weñan neenawint? awayna niiyaanaan? awina oma kiyānaw? who are we?

We are Indigenous peoples. We are Indigenous peoples whose ancestors entered into the sacred treaties with the British sovereign that laid the foundations for provinces, including kisiskâciwan (Saskatchewan). The Constitution Act of 1982 recognized and affirmed our existing aboriginal and treaty rights, which comprise our Indigenous constitutions. The Constitution of Canada recognized 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 Metis, First Nations and Inuit nations across Canada, possessing a rich linguistic history that includes over 60 distinct Indigenous languages within 12 linguistic families.
Let us lead with respect
Developing the Indigenous Strategy

The development of the Indigenous Strategy is rooted in the Indigenous principles of nikanitam manachihitowinik (Cree) and ni manachihitoonaan (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 (Elder) and Traditional Knowledge Keeper Gathering began our strategic process “in a good way”, convening the largest gathering in University history. Other gatherings were held at the request of kēhtē-ayak (Elders) and Knowledge Keepers in attendance, as well as an Indigenous Community Gathering of more than 80 Indigenous peoples from 29 organizations at Wanuskewin Heritage Park. The voices of Indigenous staff, faculty, and students were also heard during gatherings at the University.

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.

We are integral to the University of Saskatchewan community. Indigenous peoples have lived on the land known as Saskatchewan—in the tip of a vast maskotew (prairie ecosystem) that blends into ayapâskweyâw (a northern bush ecosystem)—since time immemorial. Indigenous peoples comprise more than 16% of Saskatchewan’s population (>175,000 people), 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; and Annie Maude “Nan” McKay, the first Métis student and Indigenous women to graduate from USask in 1915, was one of USask’s earliest Indigenous hires and instrumental in forming the alumni association.
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.

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*Photo of kéhté-ayak (Elders), Knowledge Keepers and Language Keepers who have contributed to our new journey.*


*Image front row:* Jacob Pete, Leona Tootoosis, Margaret Keewatin, Maria Linklater, Monica Buffalo, Nora Cummings, Mona Creely-Johns.

ëdîñïots’i?ait’i?á?
tokitahan ounhipi he?
dókiya ecídayabi he?
ahndi gaa ondosayang?
taanday ooshchiiyaahk?
tântê öma ê ohtohtêyahk?
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
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-ayak (Elder) Maria Campbell

day schools where they experienced severe cultural, emotional, spiritual, physical, and sexual abuse. Canada used education as a weapon of cultural 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 structures 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

- **18000 – 10000 BCE**: Irrefutable archeological evidence of human occupation in the northern half of North America.

- **10000 – 2500 BCE**: Settlements and communities are present almost everywhere in what is now North America.

- **2500 BCE – 700 AD**: Four broad cultural plains traditions become established: plains village, woodland, bison hunters, and sub-Arctic.

- **700 – 1690**: Indigenous peoples continue to establish large and complex societies—there is growing use of the buffalo drive and jumps; communities set up large seasonal camps consisting of hundreds of tipi rings; construction of ‘medicine wheels’ up to thirty feet in diameter; adoption of the bow and arrow.

- **1497**: John Cabot arrives on the coast of Beothuk territory, in what is now Newfoundland.

- **1800s**: • 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).
  • 1889: Treaty 8, first signing
  • 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

- **1900s**: • 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

- **2000s**: • 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

- **2016**: The North-Canadian culture and practices
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 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.
ëdʌsit‘asʔa?
tokiya ounyanpi he?
udókina he?
ahndi eazang?
taanday itohtyaahek?
tântê ōma ē itohtêyahk?
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: nikānītāni manāchihtowinhk (Cree) | ni manāchihitoonaan (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
The university can’t do it alone. The community has to be involved. That helps everyone gain their proudness. The university can coordinate everyone involved and bring in good people.

kēhtē-ayak (Elder)

recognize these efforts and successes within our units, departments, colleges and the University as we look to the future. For instance:¹

- 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 Nation 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 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 concerted 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

¹ 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 Appendix.
the University that draws upon the wisdom, knowledge, cultures, traditions, histories, lived experiences and stories of Indigenous peoples.

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 is for all Indigenous peoples, the University of Saskatchewan makes space for all, and this strategy 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—conjouring the creative spirit that inspires innovation.
- **Renewal.** Strengthening and sustaining pathways of access and success—connecting with Indigenous youth.

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**Indigenization, we can’t do it without the land.**

kēhtē-ayak (Elder) Eugene Arcand
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 that implementing these actions can have on the University community, monitor and evaluate progress, and ensure accountability to this Indigenous Strategy and the larger University commitment. **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, 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 problems. 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, which can benefit and strengthen our communities.

**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 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. wellness 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 counsellors, ‘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 or systems outside unions 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 Buffalo Circle members—people that are nominated 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 political, economic, social and cultural determination.

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**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\(^2\), 2019, we had 52 Indigenous scholars and instructors, and 165 Indigenous staff/administrative support.\(^2\) Our Indigenous student numbers continue to grow beyond the 3,600 that now grace the University’s campus. 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 supports for Indigenous students, staff, faculty and leaders (e.g. access to Indigenous counsellors, physicians, therapists, as well as traditional Indigenous approaches).

- Facilitating knowledge of and access to broader wholistic wellness support for Indigenous students, staff, faculty and leaders (e.g. partnering with the City of Saskatoon to familiarize individuals to the campus and city—

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\(^2\) The University recognizes Indigenous people as those who self-identify as First Nations, Mētis 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.
childcare, counselling services, housing, recreation, transportation, financial support).

- 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 access to each other and, in particular, Indigenous mentors and advocates.

**Markers**

- Greater integration of and access to diverse, culturally relevant, and alternative health and wellness 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.
**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.

**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.

**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-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.
- 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 partnerships and agreements (e.g. MOUs) 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 experiential cultural and language learning opportunities for University students, staff, faculty and leaders.

- 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 history and current Indigenous realities in Canada (‘growth attributes’).

- Increase in the number of partnerships and agreements with Indigenous communities.
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 holistic, 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 to 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, teepee ground).

■ Allocating space and financial support to embedding local Indigenous artistry and cultural outputs across University spaces (i.e. 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 experts on 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 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 manāchihitowin, 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.

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**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 dynamic 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 is “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 of 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 manāchihitowinihk (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 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\(^3\) and TCPS 2—Chapter 9\(^4\).

- Enabling the inclusion and engagement of kēhtē-ayak (Elders) and Knowledge Keepers in research studies (e.g. community-based/led 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, 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).

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\(^3\) Ownership, control, access, and possession.

\(^4\) Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada
- Investing in short- and long-term resourcing (i.e. core support vs. soft financial commitments) to support Indigenization, decolonization and reconciliation initiatives.

- 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.

**Markers**

- 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 conducted and published in collaboration with kēhté-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 (to allow Indigenous student groups to engage them more effectively).
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), nihtaooshchikaywin (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.

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**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), nihtaooshchikaywin (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 | Nihtaooshchikaywin 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”. Where does our wisdom lie? How are we acknowledging, celebrating, resourcing work that is ‘done in a good way’?

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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 novel 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 scholarship.
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-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.


ёдłaghë nṳhlaʔa?
taku hec’eh cwac’amin?
wozuye dágu he?
wayganayn tsi dotamang?
Kaykw̱y chi tootamaahk?
kíkw̱ya ohi kā wí 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 diversity 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 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:
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 & Staff Forum, January 31st, 2019

- 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 holders with knowledge 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.
Appendix: 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. Coined by Cree Scholar Willie Ermine, he 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.

**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** 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.

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Appendix: 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 Indigenization.

- 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 Indigenization, 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 kēhtē-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.
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.
Appendix: 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.
Appendix: 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 Indigenization.

Agriculture & 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 Aboriginal 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 & 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 GDI.

- 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 Aboriginal 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, allocating up to 3 new faculty positions annually over the next 10 years to elevate the proportion of Aboriginal 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 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, ART356.3: 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.

- **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

- Creation of the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teach Education Program (SUNTEP), with the primary goal of ensuring people of Métis ancestry 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.
- Establishment of Indigenous Land-Based Education Cohort MED, Educational Foundations. Students learn the Indigenous ethics of relationality and accountability with Indigenous faculty by studying Indigenous approaches to the research, teaching and learning in educational institutions.

- 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 People’s Initiatives Community (IPIC) Engineering Access Program to engage students with Indigenous ancestry 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.

Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

- Creation of an Indigenous Studies PhD Program in September 2017.

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.
Kinesiology

- Creation of a required course 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.

- Development of one of Canada’s first undergraduate kinesiology courses in Indigenous Wellness: KIN 306.3: Introduction to Indigenous Wellness

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**

- Development of an Indigenous-led national research plan to guide a $43M investment through the National Institute of Indigenous Peoples’ Health.

- Appointment of Dr. Alexandra King as the first Cameco Chair in Indigenous Health at USask; Dr. King works with Indigenous communities and relevant stakeholders to understand the health and wellness needs of First Nations and Métis peoples in Saskatchewan and the structural changes that needed for improved Indigenous health outcomes.

- Allocation of 10% of the annual positions available in the Pathways to Medicine (MD) Program to individuals of Indigenous ancestry.

- Creation of the Indigenous Student Mentorship Program that connects current medical students with Indigenous high school students in a mentorship capacity.

- Allocation of annual scholarships to continuing students of Indigenous ancestry in premedical studies through the College of Medicine Pathway Support for Indigenous students.

- Formation of the Aboriginal Health Committee to strengthen culturally based linkages between Indigenous world views and the medical community.

**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 & 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.
Appendix: Further Reading

- Indian Control of Indian Education, National Indian Brotherhood (1972).
- OCAP™.
- TCPS2 Chapter 9.
- TRC Final Report