

ohpahotân | oohpaahotaan
let's fly up together

Indigenous Strategy
for the University of Saskatchewan

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Presentation to the Retirees Association (USRA)
March 16, 2022

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.

Developing the Indigenous Strategy

engagement
validation
dissemination

2018

ENGAGEMENT ADVICE AND GUIDANCE MEETINGS WITH INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

APRIL

17TH Indigenous Strategy Proposal, Presentation to Senior Leaders Forum – Saskatoon Inn, Saskatoon

NOVEMBER

1ST Engagement, Advice and Guidance Meeting with Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers – Holiday Inn Express, Saskatoon

29TH 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

30TH Morning: Engagement, Advice and Guidance Meeting with Indigenous Undergraduate Students – Green Room, Administration Building, USask

30TH Afternoon: Engagement, Advice and Guidance Meeting with Indigenous Graduate Students – Green Room, Administration Building, USask

31ST Morning: Engagement, Advice and Guidance Meeting with Indigenous staff– Green Room, Administration Building, USask

31ST Afternoon: Engagement, Advice and Guidance Meeting with Indigenous faculty– Green Room, Administration Building, USask

MARCH

7TH Engagement, Advice and Guidance Meeting with Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers – Holiday Inn Express, Saskatoon

APRIL

2ND Engagement, Advice and Guidance Meeting with Indigenous undergraduate students – College of Education Building, USask

4TH Engagement, Advice and Guidance Meeting with Indigenous undergraduate students – Health Sciences Building, USask

5TH Engagement, Advice and Guidance Meeting with Indigenous undergraduate students – Arts and Science Building, USask

MAY

30TH 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

31ST Presentation of draft Indigenous Strategy and Validation Sessions with Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers cancelled due to COVID 19

APRIL

7TH 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

8TH 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

9TH 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

6TH Meeting with Elders, Traditional Knowledge Keepers, Language Keepers – Naming, Advice/ Guidance on ceremonial aspects of strategy launch

7TH Indigenous Strategy presentation to University of Saskatchewan – Presidents Executive Committee

12TH Indigenous Strategy presentation to University of Saskatchewan Deans Council

12TH Indigenous Strategy presentation to University of Saskatchewan – Finance and Resources AVP/Directors

13TH Indigenous Strategy presentation to Presidents Executive Council – Council Chairs

21ST Indigenous Strategy presentation to University of Saskatchewan University Council

25TH Indigenous Strategy presentation to University of Saskatchewan Provosts Advisory Committee

26TH Indigenous Strategy presentation to University of Saskatchewan Teaching, Learning, and Academic Resources Committee of Council

JUNE

18TH Indigenous Strategy presentation to University of Saskatchewan University Council

19TH Indigenous Strategy presentation to University of Saskatchewan Alumni Advisory Board

JULY

7TH Indigenous Strategy presentation to University of Saskatchewan Board of Governors

OCTOBER

18TH University of Saskatchewan Senate (motion to accept gift)













Strategy Through Indigenous Perspectives

Strategy As Gift

Indigenous Peoples gifted 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.

Strategy As Gift

“That is the fundamental nature of gifts: they move, and their value increases with their passage... The more something is shared, the greater its value becomes.”

In the gift economy, gifts are not free. The essence of the gift is that it creates a set of relationships. The currency of a gift economy is, at its root, reciprocity.”

Adapted from *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Wall Kimmerer

Strategy As Reciprocity

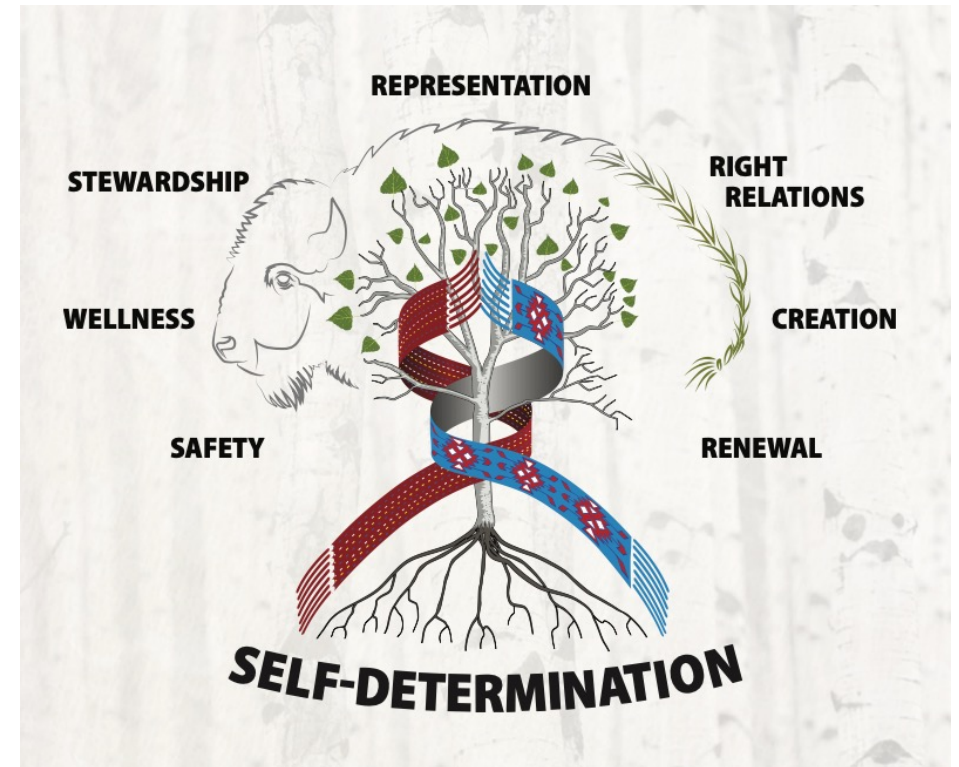
- Responsibilities
- Belonging, empowerment and hope
- Enlighten and guide

Strategy As Voice

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

Strategy As Metaphor

- ohpahotân (let's fly up together)
- ohpahowipîsim (flying up moon)
- Double Helix
- Poplar Tree
- Bison
- Sweetgrass



Strategy As Responsibility

We Are All Treaty People

- Awaken understanding
- Build relationships and inspire collaborative and respectful action
- Coexist with the University Plan 2025
- Walk parallel journeys toward a common future
- Received in the spirit intended by the Indigenous Peoples who created and gifted it

Seven Fundamental Commitments

Safety

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

Guiding Principles

- "Nothing about us, without us" *as* an antidote for exclusion.
- Belonging *as* a healing practice.
- Allyship *as* a demonstration of humility.

Wellness

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

Guiding Principle

- Wholistic wellness *as* self-determination.

Stewardship

Preserving and amplifying Indigenous cultures, languages and protocol learnings.

Guiding Principles

- Ceremony *as* sanctification.
- Land *as* first teacher.
- Language *as* expression of life.

Representation

Uplifting Indigenous peoples in University spaces and places.

Guiding Principles

- Indigenous presence *as* validation.
- Teaching and learning *as* “coming to know”.
- Art and architecture *as* symbols of respecting and honouring seven generations.
- Indigenous ceremonies *as* community and identity/spirit builders.

Right Relations

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

Guiding Principles

- Respectful, reciprocal relationships *as* restoring, renewing, rejuvenating and (re)conciliating.
- Active and respectful communication with Indigenous peoples (on- and off-campus) *as* bridge- and Nation-building.
- Research *as* sacred.
- Systemic and structural transformation *as* valuing and uplifting Indigenous knowledges.

Creation

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

Guiding Principles

- Creativity *as* Life Giving.
- Wise Practices *as* affirmation.

Renewal

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

Guiding Principle

- Indigenous youth *as* our strength, our hope, our future.

Calls to Action & Markers

Calls to Action

- Concrete, actionable items that reflect the voices and aspirations of Indigenous students, faculty, staff, and members of broader Indigenous communities
- Each of the seven commitments have specific Calls to Action
- 37 total Calls to Action

Markers

- Serve as guideposts for the university to better understand the impact of implementing these actions, to help monitor and evaluate progress, and to ensure accountability
- Each of the seven commitments have specific Markers
- 34 total Markers

Implementing the Indigenous Strategy at the University of Saskatchewan

University of Saskatchewan

Wise Practices

- Integration of Indigenous knowledges and experiences directly into the learning charter
- Creation of an Indigenous Voices Program
- Establishment of an Indigenous Learning Activities Fund

University of Saskatchewan

Wise Practices

- Creation of Experiential Learning Opportunities for Indigenous students or with Indigenous communities/organizations
- Formation of Building Bridges, a partnership between the Aboriginal Students' Centre and the International Student and Study Abroad Centre

Indigenous Strategy

Calls to Action Examples

- [Safety] 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).

Indigenous Strategy

Calls to Action Examples

- [Wellness] 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.

Indigenous Strategy

Calls to Action Examples

- [Stewardship] Promoting capacity-building, skill and knowledge development in Indigenous histories and contemporary realities (challenges and successes) for non-Indigenous educators and leaders.

Indigenous Strategy

Calls to Action Examples

- [Representation] 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).

Indigenous Strategy

Calls to Action Examples

- [Right Relations] 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.

Indigenous Strategy

Calls to Action Examples

- [Creation] Continued support for wise practices (e.g., Graduation Powwow, Indigenous programming [e.g., ITEP, SUNTEP, wîcêhtowin], Aboriginal Student Centre, Sharing Circles, Indigenous advisors, staff, faculty and leaders).

Indigenous Strategy

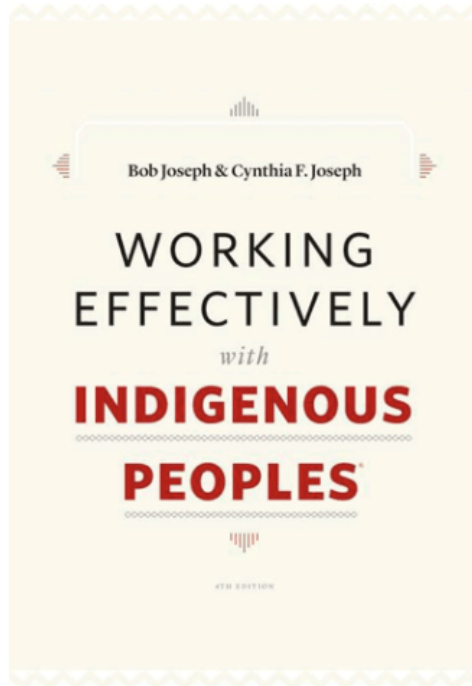
Calls to Action Examples

- [Renewal] 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.

Timeline



- 2023 – Sharing Success Stories & Lessons Learned
- Fall 2022 – Implementation Update Sessions
- Winter 2022 – Follow-up Sessions
- Fall 2021 – Indigenous Strategy Presentations



The 4th edition of our very popular book expands upon the previous editions with additional content, insight, our trademarked RESPECT training model, and suggestions on what one should do and what one should avoid doing when communicating and working with Indigenous Peoples.

Our goal with our courses, and this book, has always been to increase readers' Indigenous awareness, cross cultural understanding, provide context, and give readers some practical hints, tips and suggestions that can be applied everywhere.

This book will provide readers with opportunities to:

- See both sides of the debate on Indigenous Peoples' rights, title and treaties
- Understand the difference between "Indigenous" and "Aboriginal"
- Sift through the rhetoric to find creative solutions to workplace challenges
- Become familiar with terminology and interpersonal communications by learning what to say and what not to say to be respectful
- Learn business reasons for governments and organizations to work respectfully and effectively with Indigenous Peoples
- Explore individual and organizational strategies for **Working Effectively with Indigenous Peoples®**
- Learn critical legal and practical information on consultation and accommodation



Video Resources

- [“How to change systemic racism in Canada”](#)
- [“Why do Indigenous topics cause such emotional discomfort?”](#)
- [“Cindy Blackstock: Bringing Justice to Indigenous Communities”](#)
- [“Racism - White Perspectives with Frances Henry”](#)
- [“York University Faculty of Health Indigenous Lecture Series - Dr. Barry Lavallee”](#)
- [“Racism - Indigenous Perspectives with Senator Murray Sinclair”](#)