



BI-NAAGWAD

IT COMES INTO VIEW

ONAAKONIGE DIBAAJIMON
INDIGENOUS INITIATIVES STRATEGY
SUMMARY REPORT

ESHPENDAAGOZID | WITH RESPECT

We offer our gratitude to the lands on which the University of Guelph campuses are situated and the Indigenous ancestors who have inhabited these lands for centuries. We recognize that our campuses are located on the lands of the Dish with One Spoon Wampum and we offer our respect to the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Delaware Nation at Moraviantown, Six Nations of the Grand River and the diverse communities of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples who reside on these lands. We also recognize that our educational and research enterprises occur on Indigenous lands across Turtle Island and Mother Earth and we endeavour to ensure that our activities honour and respect Indigenous peoples and their lands.



IZHICHIGE MIN | OUR COMMITMENTS

The University of Guelph is committed to working towards decolonization and reconciliation with First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples, communities and lands.

- We seek to inspire future generations of scholars and citizens to reconcile with First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples and lands
- We believe in the need for equitable access to education, employment and support for First Nations, Inuit and Métis scholars, students and their communities
- We are committed to fostering meaningful partnerships with First Nations, Inuit and Métis Knowledge Holders, communities and organizations
- We are committed to enhancing recognition and respect for Indigenous cultures, languages and ways of knowing, being and doing
- We are committed to innovative Indigenous research and expanding how we understand and interpret the world

MIIGWECHIWE NIM | OUR GRATITUDE

We would like to acknowledge and express our gratitude to those who provided guidance to and participated in the Indigenous Initiatives Strategy. We would like to thank the Advisory Circle for supporting this process. We also extend our gratitude to Steering Committee and Working Group members, students, faculty, staff and community members for their time and invaluable contribution, knowledge and experience. These individuals came together with an ambition to support the decolonization of the academy to open up spaces where First Nations, Inuit and Métis voices, knowledges and ways of knowing, being and doing can co-exist with Western knowledge systems. Their dedication and commitment are what allows us to move forward on this path of indigenization and reconciliation.





ANDAWENDAN | OUR NEED

Through the pursuit of truth, the University of Guelph aspires to be a positive change in the world - to *Improve Life*. This core value requires us to look inward and acknowledge the areas in which we need to develop further understanding and action in order to reach our broader goals. As a research-intensive university in Canada, it is essential that we take responsibility for and work toward correcting our direct and indirect involvement in colonization and the marginalization of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples in education and research. Established on lands within the Dish with One Spoon territory, we must also reflect on our role in the displacement of Indigenous peoples and consider how we can ensure that Indigenous peoples have access to the lands and resources we now steward. The relevance of this work aligns with the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples' Recommendations (1991), United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007), the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action (2015) and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Woman and Girls Calls for Justice (2019).

Over the past two decades, the presence and recognition of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples, communities, cultures and ways of knowing have grown across campus but there is still much work to be done. It is our intent that this strategy will reaffirm the University of Guelph's commitment to decolonization and reconciliation and provide direction for the development of a coordinated approach to develop, enhance, support and evaluate Indigenous initiatives at the University of Guelph.

The Case for Decolonizing Post-Secondary Education

Canada's history is replete with examples of policies focused on the elimination, displacement and assimilation of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. These policies forcibly removed populations, destroyed Indigenous institutions and attempted to abolish First Nations, Inuit and Métis languages, cultures and spiritual practices. While Treaties were negotiated with many First Nations, these agreements were often reinterpreted, terminated or ignored and First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples were often dispossessed from agriculturally and resource rich areas to reserves and settlements in remote areas. In 1876, the Canadian government passed the Indian Act which effectively allowed them to control the lives of First Nations peoples and their access to land, ceremony and political distinctiveness. From Confederation until 1960, First Nations people were unable to vote in federal elections without enfranchisement and involuntary enfranchisement was further used to destabilize Indigenous governance. The Métis people were also subject to the impacts of colonial policy and settler migration through displacement from their settlements that caused them to experience hardship and prejudice residing within the road allowances. Between 1953 – 1960, the Inuit were subject to several high Arctic relocations and policies that lead to the erosion of their way of life in the north. These colonial actions had the ultimate goal of eradicating links to Indigenous cultures and identities in order to eliminate First Nations, Inuit and Métis rights to the land and its resources. Over two hundred years of colonial policies and oppressive practices have led to the destruction of Indigenous sovereignty and intergenerational trauma within Indigenous families and communities. They have also created divisions in society that have led to the adoption of stereotypes, biases and racism that continues to negatively impact First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples.

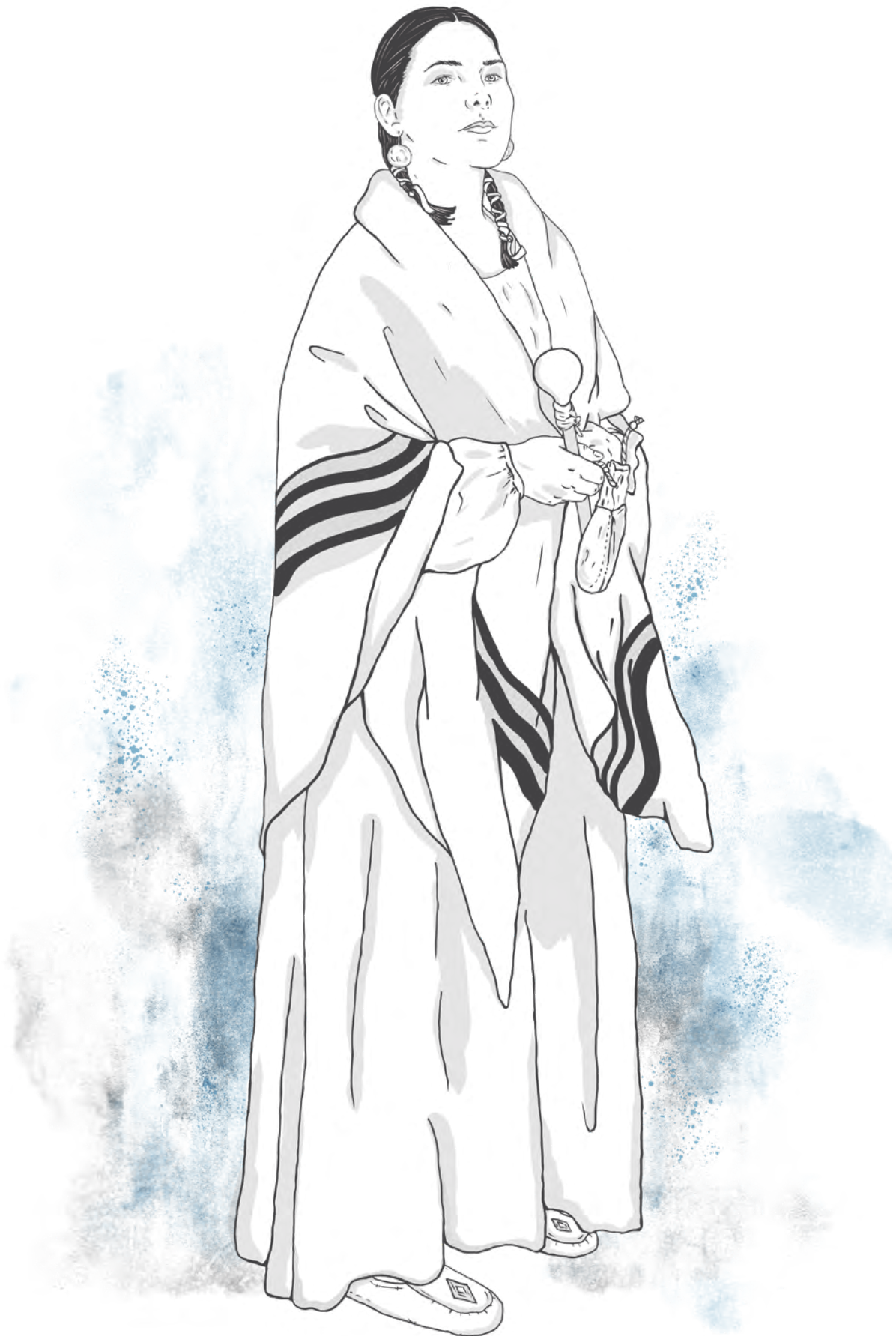
The longstanding relationship between colonization and education began with the formation of residential schools in 1831, which separated Indigenous children from their families and cultures and disciplined their use of their own languages and practices. Indigenous children in residential schools were not only exposed to dangerous and unhygienic conditions, malnutrition and abuse, but also to inappropriate and inadequate curriculum that demeaned their cultures and peoples. While the last residential school closed in 1996, Indigenous engagement in education has been severely impacted

by these horrendous experiences. The Canadian post-secondary system was established based on Western thought and ideologies similar to that used to establish residential schools, and for decades, routinely provided an inaccurate account of Canadian history and Canada's relationship with Indigenous peoples. In addition, First Nations, Inuit and Métis worldviews and ways of knowing were often excluded or debased in post-secondary environments in favour of Western educational practices and knowledges.

Educational attainment was also used as a mechanism to erode Indigenous kinship and communities. Under the Indian Act, First Nations men who attained a post-secondary education were involuntarily enfranchised and stripped of their cultural and family connections. Additionally, the marginalization of Indigenous knowledges and cultures also resulted in Indigenous students, faculty and staff often not seeing themselves reflected in academia. When Indigenous content is included, it often focuses on disparities such as the increased risk factors that First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples face rather than on Indigenous resiliency, knowledges, pedagogies or approaches to research. As a result, these educational policies and focuses perpetuate the racialized constructs of Indigenous peoples and contribute to a negative view or distrust of mainstream post-secondary education and associated research.

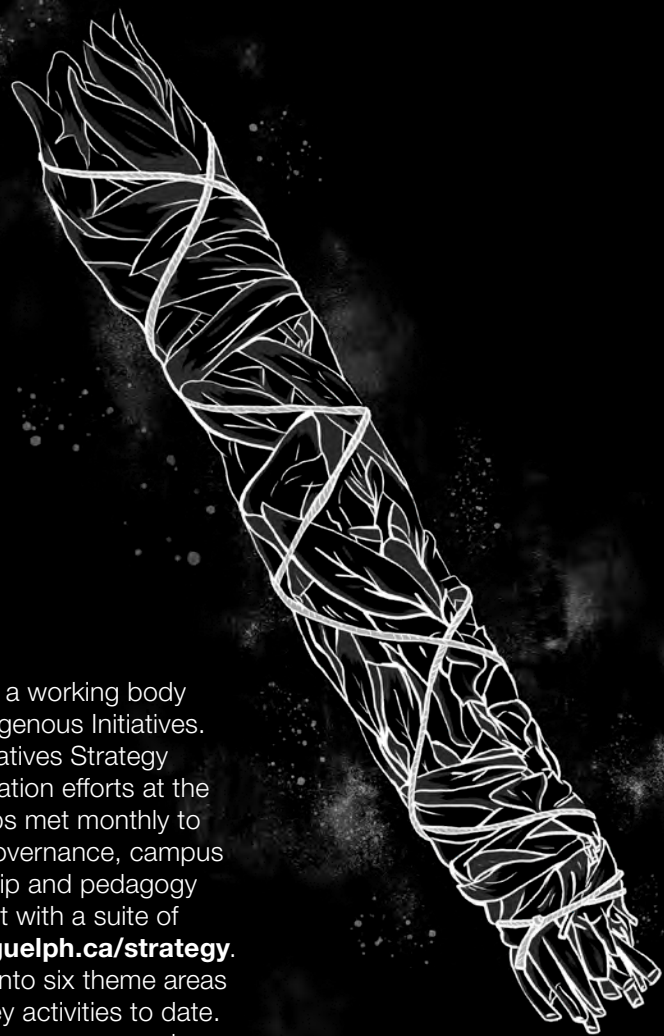
Guided by Eurocentric and colonial methodologies, paradigms and research questions, post-secondary institutions including the University of Guelph have a long history of conducting unethical research on First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples and communities. Historically, research involving Indigenous peoples and lands was characterized as an extractive and colonial process, in which Indigenous peoples were excluded from the creation of research and did not directly learn of its results. This research not only misrepresented Indigenous peoples but has also failed to provide any benefit to the Indigenous individuals and their communities and, in some cases, created harm, biases and further oppression. The Western positivist orientations of this research perpetuated the idea that Western approaches to research are always the right approach and only approach to take when conducting research.





IZHITAW | OUR PROCESS

The Indigenous Initiatives Strategic Task Force was established as a working body serving as a subset of the President's Advisory Committee on Indigenous Initiatives. The mandate of the Task Force was to develop an Indigenous Initiatives Strategy aimed at guiding the advancement of reconciliation and decolonization efforts at the University of Guelph. Over the course of a year, five working groups met monthly to review and discuss policies and practices across the themes of governance, campus environment, Indigenous student support, research and scholarship and pedagogy and curriculum. Each of the five working groups produced a report with a suite of recommendations that are available for review at indigenous.uoguelph.ca/strategy. In the pages that follow, these recommendations are aggregated into six theme areas which are presented alongside priority actions and highlights of key activities to date. We also recognize that indigenization and reconciliation are active processes and the work will continue to evolve as we learn and grow.



NGIKENDAMIN | WHAT WE LEARNED

Maadakamigad | Guiding the Way Forward

Indigenous leadership and contributions are essential for realizing meaningful Indigenous inclusion and equity within the academy. However, post-secondary institutions have often placed indigenization efforts exclusively on the shoulders of a small number of First Nations, Inuit and Métis students, faculty, staff and community members, and this burden has created burnout, distrust and at times, a withdrawal from the academy. Transformational change requires increasing Indigenous representation and leadership and the culturally-appropriate harmonization of Indigenous modes of behaviour, organization and knowledge throughout the institution, its processes and its conduct. It is not enough to simply try to integrate Indigenous practices into university systems based on Western ideologies because they are often opposed to Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing. Traditionally unwelcoming to diverse ways of knowing, the academy needs to make space for new and emerging modes of knowledge creation and dissemination and to expand opportunities for Indigenous peoples to lead and thrive. Decolonization efforts must ensure that First Nations, Inuit and Métis relational paradigms are reflected in the strategic directions, learning environments and research activities at the University of Guelph.

Transformational change within the academy requires dedicated leadership, a robust institutional wide commitment and increased Indigenous representation in governance processes.

Priorities

1. Expand First Nations, Inuit and Métis representation in University governance structures and senior leadership.
2. Explicitly embed indigeneity within University guiding documents.
3. Nurture and strengthen University relationships with Indigenous communities, organizations, Indigenous Institutes and governments.
4. Develop a structure and guidelines to ensure the engagement of Indigenous educational and research experts, Knowledge Holders, organizations and communities across aspects of campus occurs in an appropriate, respectful and coordinated manner.
5. Establish a full-time, or full-time equivalent, Elder or Knowledge Holder position.

Highlights

- Establishment of the President's Advisory Committee on Indigenous Initiatives
- Establishment of the Special Advisor to the President on Indigenous Initiatives

Izhitwaawin | Enhancing Campus Culture

The on-going effects of colonialism within post-secondary institutions have marginalized or excluded First Nations, Inuit and Métis cultures and languages within the campus environment. To create an inclusive, equitable and culturally safe environment that supports the emotional, spiritual, physical and intellectual needs of Indigenous students, staff and faculty, a wholistic review of places, spaces, practices and programming must take place. Campus decolonization requires that Indigenous peoples see accurate representations of themselves through the resurgence and revitalization of their cultures, languages and land-based practices. Culturally responsive spaces and physical representations serve as a point of connection for Indigenous peoples as well as educational opportunities for all students, faculty and staff on the histories, stories and experiences of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. An enhanced understanding of Indigenous peoples and their relationships with Canada and the Crown can help to improve Indigenous-settler relationships and foster opportunities for the co-existence of Indigenous and Western knowledges within the academy. By incorporating First Nations, Inuit and Métis cultures, languages and traditions throughout campus, we will recognize and uphold our relational accountability to the land and Indigenous peoples.

Enhancing Indigenous presence in all aspects of campus life will foster awareness of the important relationships Indigenous peoples have with the lands on which our campuses are located and provide Indigenous peoples with opportunities to engage in acts of cultural reconnection and resurgence.



Priorities

1. Develop a framework and series of resources to acknowledge the lands on which the University of Guelph campuses reside.
2. Establish a plan for fostering Indigenous language revitalization on campus.
3. Incorporate First Nations, Inuit and Métis culture, art and language within the physical spaces on campus.
4. Establish a partnership between Indigenous Initiatives and Diversity and Human Rights to indigenize equity, diversity, inclusivity and anti-racism initiatives.
5. Develop an Indigenous training framework for faculty, staff and students and establish an Indigenous training position dedicated to designing and providing Indigenous intercultural training.
6. Enhance Indigenous representation in institutional ceremonies including convocation.
7. Establish facilities, policies and protocols that allow for the accommodation of First Nations, Inuit and Métis cultural and spiritual practices across campus.

Highlights

- Incorporation of land acknowledgements in institutional documents and at campus events
- Provisions developed to allow for Indigenous cultural and spiritual practices, including smudging, pipe ceremonies and the lighting of the quilliq
- Establishment of Indigenous House in residence



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Mino inawendimin | Cultivating Responsible Relationships

As universities begin to decolonize and create opportunities for Indigenous staff, faculty and Knowledge Holders, they must also update policies and practices to ensure the workplace is welcoming, supportive and accommodating of Indigenous cultural practices including the importance of community connections, holidays and ceremonies. It is also essential to recognize and account for the additional service, outreach, mentorship and community work that are often asked of a small complement of First Nations, Inuit and Métis faculty and staff. For this to be true, it is important to ensure that administrators, human resources, hiring committees and supervisors have the appropriate level of cultural competency to understand how best to support the needs of First Nations, Inuit and Métis employees. Cultural competency must extend to not only university-employee relationships but also to relationships between the University and First Nations, Inuit and Métis Knowledge Holders. This requires clear policies and guidelines that do not create undue hardship for providing tokens of reciprocity to Knowledge Holders engaging in programming, teaching or research.

A commitment to remove systemic barriers in recruitment, development and promotion of First Nations, Inuit and Métis faculty, staff and Knowledge Holders is required to increase employment and engagement opportunities.

Priorities

1. Review Human Resources policies and practices with a focus on supporting the needs of First Nations, Inuit and Métis staff and faculty.
2. Ensure tenure and promotion processes include criteria that recognize the intensive work and challenges involved with Indigenous and community-based research.
3. Explore the need for a process for Indigenous ancestry verification for students, staff and faculty.
4. Develop processes and resources to guide the distribution of honoraria and incentives to Indigenous peoples.

Highlights

- Hiring of eight Indigenous faculty members between 2016-2020
- Nine faculty members self-identified as Indigenous (Diversity Matters Census, 2019)
- 54 staff members self-identified as Indigenous representing an increase of 125% over a five-year period (Diversity Matters Census, 2019)





Ge gikinoo'amawend | Wholistic Development of Indigenous Learners

It is imperative that decolonization efforts in post-secondary education focus on culturally-responsive outreach, wayfinding, recruitment and development opportunities for First Nations, Inuit and Métis learners. Supports must prioritize Indigenous models of care to attend to the learner's emotional, spiritual, physical and intellectual needs and work to address the legacy of trauma and marginalization imposed by education systems and colonialization on Indigenous families and communities. Supporting Indigenous learners to pursue their educational goals and to effectively transition to university life and study is essential for their success. Indigenous learners often experience numerous barriers to post-secondary attainment. Financial instability is a significant challenge and increasing the funding available to First Nation, Inuit and Métis students has a great positive impact on Indigenous student experiences and completion rates. Another substantial barrier is the race-based insensitivity and discrimination experienced by Indigenous learners in public spaces and within the classroom and common areas on post-secondary campuses. By emphasizing wholistic development opportunities for Indigenous learners, building inclusive teaching-learning environments and respectively incorporating Indigenous curriculum and pedagogies, the University of Guelph can help First Nations, Inuit and Métis learners feel welcome, respected, valued and confident in their cultural identity while providing an exceptional educational experience.

First Nations, Inuit and Métis learners deserve equitable access to an educational environment that allows them to achieve their academic pursuits while ensuring that they are able to strengthen their personal identity and cultural connectedness.

Priorities

1. Expand opportunities for youth, their families and communities to engage with campus through programming and events.
2. Strengthen the relationship between the Indigenous Student Centre and Recruitment and Admissions to expand outreach to and support for diploma, undergraduate, graduate and students.
3. Establish admissions goals and monitor outcomes of Indigenous students for the purpose of enhancing supports and eliminating educational and employment barriers.
4. Expand services, programming and support for First Nations, Inuit and Métis students including personal, cultural, academic, financial and career development.
5. Establish a plan for the development of a new Indigenous Student Centre that accommodates academic, personal, cultural, social and physical needs of Indigenous students.
6. Stabilize the funding for the Indigenous Student Centre programming and services.

- Established two annual Indigenous Undergraduate Research Assistantships
- Acknowledgment of First Nations, Inuit and Métis graduates at the annual Celebration of Indigenous Achievement

Highlights

- Increased Indigenous student enrollment between 2016–2018, 20% for undergraduate students and 104% for graduate students
- Established multiple awards for masters and doctoral Indigenous students with an annual budget of \$300,000



Nanda 'gikendamowin | Seeking, Listening and Meaning Making

Research and scholarship within the academy privileges Western epistemologies, ontologies and axiologies over alternative ways of knowing. This superiority has marginalized Indigenous and decolonial knowledges, allowed problematic and disturbingly unethical research involving Indigenous peoples and excluded opportunities for new and innovative approaches to research. In order to address these shortcomings, it is vital to transform research with Indigenous peoples to ensure it is conducted with Indigenous leadership, on topics of Indigenous priorities, in consideration of Indigenous methodologies and with respect for Indigenous self-determination. It is also essential that the realities involved in conducting community-based research are considered and reflected in university procedures and protocols such as the additional time required for community engagement, relationship building and maintenance, ethical collaboration and the co-creation and transmission of knowledge. Engaging with Indigenous communities, peoples and lands in ethical and responsible research requires resources and supports across the University of Guelph from the Office of Research, the Research Ethics Board and departmental administrators, to faculty, post-doctoral fellows and graduate and undergraduate students.



Excellence in research with Indigenous communities necessitates working collaboratively within ethical spaces and respecting Indigenous sovereignty.

Priorities

1. Review and improve institutional procedures, protocols and policies for doing ethical research with and for Indigenous peoples and lands.
2. Establish development opportunities and resources to support faculty, graduate students and postdoctoral fellows to conduct research with and for Indigenous people and communities.
3. Establish an Indigenous research liaison position in support of Indigenous relationships and research.

Highlights

- Establishment of one internally-funded Indigenous Post-Doctoral Fellowship
- Launch of the *Conservation through Reconciliation Partnership*
- Establishment of the Master of Conservation Leadership with an emphasis on Indigenous-led conservation governance
- Our Indigenous World — Reconciliation and Research



Gikinawaabindimin | Learning Together

Decolonization in education requires fundamental changes to how Indigenous peoples, cultures, languages and knowledges are taught within the academy. Instructors must strive to demonstrate a sincere commitment to Indigenous knowledges and to the inclusion of the experiences of Indigenous peoples. To accomplish this, instructors must have access to educational developers, Knowledge Holders and resources to support the development of equitable and safe(r) learning environments, meaningful Indigenous content and the adoption of appropriate Indigenous pedagogies. However, before this can occur, barriers that currently hinder these practices such as a lack of knowledge or confidence, prejudiced perspectives and uncertainties about the relevance of content, activities and evaluation methods must be addressed. Meaningful curricular inclusion will demonstrate a commitment to fostering learning environments where students can become reflective and engaged citizens and can learn in an environment where they are exposed to First Nations, Inuit and Métis voices, scholars and content that moves beyond the colonial narrative and presents Indigenous vibrancy, resistance, acts of sustenance and land-based knowledges.

Priorities

1. Identify indigenization of the curriculum as a University priority and develop a framework to transform the curriculum.
2. Establish development opportunities and resources to support faculty, instructors and teaching assistants through indigenizing teaching and learning.
3. Increase access to course content that relates to Indigenous history, culture, past and current and ways of knowing, being and doing for diploma, graduate and undergraduate students.
4. Develop culturally-responsive emotional support services that are available to all students to assist in processing the historical and cultural significance of Indigenous content.
5. Establish an Indigenous curricular specialist position to support educational transformation.
6. Establish faculty positions whose research is focused on the scholarship of Indigenous teaching and learning.

Highlights

- Enhanced Indigenous curricula—e.g.
 - **CONS*6000** Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Governance Models
 - **HIST*3390** Governments and Indigenous Spaces
 - **HIST*6630** Indigenous Research Relations and Methodologies
 - **INDG*1100** Indigenous Language and Culture
 - **SOAN*4210** Indigenous-Settler Relations in Canadian Society
- Establishment of the College of Social and Applied Human Sciences Indigenization Committee
 - Report: Indigenizing Curricula and Pedagogies
 - Student Project: Picturing Decolonization Within the Academy
- Development of the Certificate in Indigenous Environmental Governance
- Development of the Bachelor of Indigenous Environmental Science and Practice



Respectful and impactful curricular change demands the establishment of processes, expertise and resources that support the culturally appropriate inclusion of Indigenous curriculum and pedagogy.

BI-NAAGWAD | IT COMES INTO VIEW

With recognition of the unique and enduring relationship First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples have with Turtle Island and in respect for Indigenous land and treaty rights in Canada, the University of Guelph strives to create equitable and ethical policies, processes and environments where current and future generations of First Nations, Inuit and Métis students, staff, faculty and community members are able to pursue their educational, career and community endeavors knowing that their voices, cultures, languages and worldviews are respected and celebrated throughout the institution.

The Indigenous Initiatives Strategy reaffirms the University of Guelph's commitment to decolonization and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and lands. The strategy has provided us with a waypoint and future directions on our path toward enhancing opportunities for First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples within the academy; fostering campus environments that are inclusive of Indigenous cultures, languages and knowledges; undertaking curricular transformation; and supporting ethical Indigenous-led research. An evolution of this magnitude requires openness, respect and an understanding of the dynamic nature of Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing that change and adapt across time.

Fundamental to ensuring that these initiatives are receptive to the evolving sociopolitical and educational realities is the cultivation of mutually beneficial relationships with First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples and communities on and off campus, governance and leadership structures within the University that are capable of guiding the way forward and a process for tracking and reflecting on the progress made. The way forward is challenging, however we have a responsibility to acknowledge and address the colonial violence and harms enacted on First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples and to contribute to a future where Indigenous ways respectfully co-exist within the Western paradigms of the academy.

For more information and to view the collection of working group reports and learn more about Indigenous Initiatives at the University of Guelph, visit indigenous.uoguelph.ca.



Language

Anishinaabemowin, the Ojibwe language, is woven throughout this report. We are thankful to Rene Meshake, Anishinaabe Elder, storyteller and artist for his translation and support in building our word bundles.

Andawendan — need

Bi-naagwad — it comes into view

Eshpendaagozid — they are highly respected

Ge gikinoo'amawend — learner

Gikinawaabindimin — we learn by observation

Izhichige min — we act

Izhitaw — to make it a certain way

Izhitwaawin — a culture; way of being

Maadakamigad — movement in the land


Miigwechiwe nim — our thanks

Mino inawendimin — good kin; good relations

Nanda 'gikendamowin — to seek for knowledge

Ngikendamin — we to seek to know

Onaakonige Dibaajimon — to tell of a plan




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