

INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

INTERIM REPORT



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University
of Regina

Office of
Indigenous
Engagement



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INTRODUCTION



As outlined in the University of Regina's 2020-2025 Strategic Plan *All Our Relations, kahkiyaw kiwâhkômâkaninawak*, respecting Indigenous ways of knowing and being is an integral value to strengthening relationships with Indigenous staff, students, and communities and in working towards accountable and transparent reconciliation actions. Developing key principles and guidelines for engagement is an action that the University of Regina's Office of Indigenous Engagement is currently working towards by developing an Indigenous Engagement Strategic Plan (IESP) that aligns with the overarching All Our Relations plan. The purpose of this aligned strategic document is to propose transformative systemic changes within the institution to decolonize university practices, policies, processes and supports.

Specifically, the IESP will identify actions to:

- Deepen indigenization of academic practices and curriculums.
- Strengthen Indigenous-centred research.
- Review, revise or redesign processes and policies within governance and administration.
- Support Indigenous student success, and
- Advance meaningful community engagement with Indigenous peoples, leaders, organizations, and communities.

To bring the vision of an Indigenous Engagement Strategic Plan to realization in a good way, input from the Indigenous students, faculty, persons and communities is imperative. These are the voices and experiences that will provide direction and a compass towards meaningful institutional change supporting greater Indigenous inclusion, success and well-being both within and beyond the University of Regina campuses. This interim report provides an overview of the work to date on the engagement portion of Castlemain's Indigenous Communications and Engagement Plan. Emergent themes are described for each engagement tactic completed to date. A full analysis of engagement themes will be incorporated into the final Communications and Engagement Plan report, when the project is expected to wrap up in May of 2023.

METHODOLOGY



A set of guiding principles have been applied to the engagement plan to ensure inclusive and meaningful engagement that aligns with the broader institutional values, as laid out in the All Our Relations strategic plan. These principles are:

Mutual Respect, Honesty and Integrity:

- Participants feel safe and supported to share opinions that are heard, respected and adequately considered.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion:

- Engagement methods are inclusive and accessible allowing all interested participants to have an opportunity to be involved in the engagement process and share diverse perspectives and opinions.

Indigenous Ways of Knowing:

- Engagements will be safe, welcoming and culturally supportive spaces by working with Elders, Knowledge Keepers and university to ensure authenticity and appropriateness.

Community and Social Responsibility:

The objectives of the engagement are clearly communicated and participants are clear about how engagement feedback will, or will not, influence plan development.

With these principles in mind, the objectives of this engagement are to:

- » *Identify actions and recommendations to remove barriers that Indigenous students, staff, faculty and other Indigenous communities face related to community engagement and student success.*
- » *Build institutional relationships with Indigenous communities.*
- » *Seek to understand and attempt to align different perspectives related to Indigenous engagement and communications for the University of Regina.*

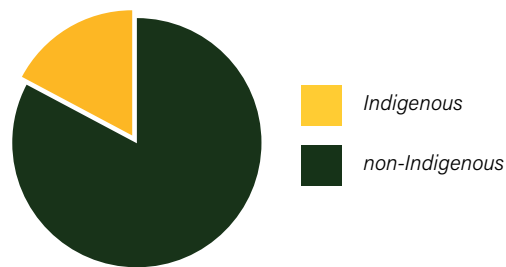
SURVEY RESULTS

One of the key engagement tactics to inform the IESP is the use of a survey. Surveys provide the ability to reach a large number of participants and can serve as a useful tool for creating baseline measures of knowledge needs or gaps, and current opinions and perspectives around the engagement topics. The intended audience for this survey was the University of Regina students. Starting on November 30th 2022 – January 5th 2023, a 12-question online survey was sent out to all U of R students, with two follow up reminders sent to encourage participation.

In total, 339 responses were received.

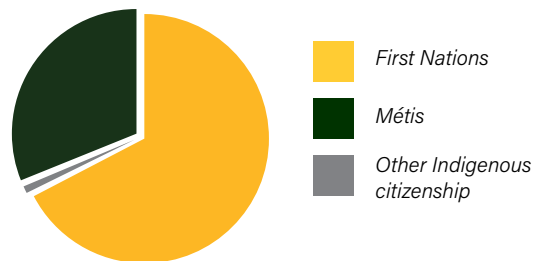
In terms of Indigenous participation:

- 33% (115) respondents identified as Indigenous,
- 66% (226) identified as non-Indigenous.
- And one respondent did not identify.



Of the 115 Indigenous respondents:

- 69 % (79) identified as First Nations students.
- 29 % (34) identified as Métis students.
- Under 1% (2) identified as other Indigenous citizenship.
- No respondents identified as Inuit students.



The survey questions focused on three themes:

1. Aligning principles; knowledge and awareness of UNDRIP, TRC and MMIWG2S+.
2. Teaching and learning; to further support academic Indigenization, Indigenous-centred research, and
3. Indigenous community engagement; interest and understanding of Treaty 4 and 6 nations.

Summary of key themes

Key themes emerging from the survey include:

Greater incorporation of Indigenous perspectives, knowledge, and scholarship into programming and curriculum

Students identified the need to include Indigenous perspectives, knowledge and scholarship into programming and curricula. The rationale for inclusion of Indigenous content into curricula was multifaceted. Firstly, students identified the need to include accurate depiction and description of the Indigenous experience pre- and post-contact to provide University or Regina students greater understanding of the colonial legacy that Indigenous peoples are healing from. This was seen as a way to eliminate prejudice and racist attitudes towards Indigenous peoples on and off campus.

Other students recommended university course content and curricula that acknowledges Indigenous history, themes and worldviews simply because the University was founded and exists on Treaty lands. There was a sense that acknowledging the land that the University sits on was respectful and appropriate. Thirdly, there was a strong sense that including and infusing Indigenous world views, scientific methods and content into courses was important because Indigenous teachings and ways of knowing have their own inherent value – from a pedagogical and epistemological perspective. The notion was expressed that having Indigenous approaches to knowledge creation and learning not only ensures Indigenous students feel like they belong, but it can have a positive impact on non-Indigenous students by providing a richer learning experience.

There was reference to having Indigenous courses and as well as infusing Indigenous topics into existing “western” style courses. On-the-land programming, Indigenous-led workshops (e.g., beading classes) as well as welcoming Indigenous guest speakers and local leaders to speak at the school was also identified as important way to circulate Indigenous themes and perspectives. Additionally, the need to have more Indigenous faculty teaching both Indigenous and non-Indigenous courses and content was highlighted. Successful Indigenization of the campus was not simply seen as creating or enabling Indigenous-related opportunities, courses and research for faculty members, but rather it was seen as providing meaningful choice for Indigenous lecturers and educators to select a career path that draws on their passions and interests.

Enhanced Indigenous presence and visibility on-campus

Students identified the need for greater representation, visibility and presence of Indigenous people, world views, history, art, and ceremonial spaces at all university campuses. The need for visual representation in all University promotional materials to future students, staff and faculty was also identified. Additionally, students emphasized the desire to see more Indigenous peoples in leadership

positions and at decision-making tables. Ensuring greater visibility on campus was one way to ensure Indigenous peoples feel welcome, acknowledged and included on campus. ***“Representation needs to be ubiquitous, not just on a section.”***

Mandatory/required Indigenous curriculum, and cultural training for staff

Students also identified the need to have a mandatory Indigenous 101 course as form of cultural sensitivity training.

Opportunities to gather and connect

Students identified the need to create more opportunities for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, staff and faculty to connect and build relationships. Many non-Indigenous students expressed interest in having more Indigenous guest lecturers and speakers welcomed onto campus, and “in-the-field” field trips (for example, nature walks, or visiting Indigenous territories/land-based learning camps).

Safer, better resourced and more welcoming campuses

The need to ensure that all University of Regina campuses (regardless of where they are located) are safe, culturally inclusive, equipped with necessary resources was emphasized. The need to provide Indigenous students support and resources, broad course options for the fees they pay was seen as an important condition for academic success and well-being for all Indigenous students, but in particular, for those residing in more northern and rural regions. Given that a significant proportion of northern and rural students are Indigenous, ensuring they have access to similar levels of support and resources is an important way of promoting equity within the University of Regina system and addressing systemic barriers. ***“Northern students are exploited financially because we lack diverse course choices...but at the same time, northern and rural students must pay the same school recreational and other dues which get diverted to the main campus and “should” stay in the north.”***

Indigenous participation in the review and development of corporate and institutional policies, processes and protocols and business planning

Students communicated that discrimination is pervasive across campus and existing policies are either not well known or effective at eliminating racism. Further, there is a perception that there are no meaningful options for recourse when Indigenous students, staff or faculty experience discrimination. To eliminate systemic racism and to promote more culturally appropriate and ‘good’ corporate policies, survey respondents called for space to be made for Indigenous persons in policy review and creation, business and capital planning, HR policies and recruitment practices.

Elimination of systemic barriers and access

Survey respondents identified the cost of tuition, in particular the cost of advanced degree programs, as a major barrier preventing more Indigenous student enrollment. There was also a perception that the University invests disproportionate resources and efforts into recruiting international students and could spend similar effort reaching and engaging with Indigenous students across Saskatchewan and beyond. In many cases, students coming from remote and northern Indigenous communities may be the first in their family to have entered into a post-secondary institution. The new experience of being on campus

can be overwhelming and come with a high financial, personal and community cost. Further, Indigenous students or potential students who are single parents may find the cost of tuition (and especially the cost of graduate programs) precludes them from furthering their education. “No-cost” tuition options, Indigenous student housing and childcare were all possible policy solutions suggested to help to break down barriers for Indigenous students.

FOCUS GROUPS



Making room for open-ended conversations via focus groups, provides space for Indigenous ways of sharing knowledge to occur through oral transmission. It also honours the relational nature of sitting and being in circle together. From a consultative perspective, focus groups can encourage participants to share their personal experiences, explore challenges and barriers that impact them, identify collective (or individual) needs and possible solutions that they deem important.

Six focus groups were conducted between December 2022 – February 2023.

Prior to planning and hosting the focus groups, Castlemain met with the University of Regina’s Board of Governors on December 13th, 2022, and again on February 13th, 2023, to identify the goals of the IESP. There was an acknowledgement that an extension and elaboration of the *All Our Relations* plan is needed to support forward momentum on the University’s reconciliation efforts to-date and that students, faculty, and local communities need to see themselves and their feedback reflected in the IESP. Additionally, the need for the IESP to include clear measures of success that consider broader goals of Indigenous student and faculty success as well as objectives around a sense of well-being, belonging, and safety on all campuses was emphasized.

With the board’s feedback in hand, CMG hosted five focus groups with:

1. Indigenous students and staff (February 14th 2023)
2. Faculty and staff (February 14th 2023)
3. Facilities management staff members (February 16th 2023)
4. Research (February 16th 2023), and
5. Second group of Indigenous students & staff (Feb 16th 2023).

In total, 30 participants attended the focus groups, of which seven participants identified as Indigenous.

Emergent themes from the two **Indigenous students and staff focus groups** include:

- A perception of performative reconciliation by the institution and its executive leaders
- Feelings of frustration with ‘the system’, and a lack of adequate supports to fulfill the needs of Indigenous students
- Need for physical spaces for cultural reclamation – for language, ceremonies, and gathering of Indigenous students
- Many Indigenous students come to school hungry and do not have their immediate needs met
- The ta-tawâw Student Centre does not feel as safe and supportive as it could be due to non-Indigenous students’ use of the space

- Systemic racism and peer-to-peer racism from non-Indigenous students and faculty, as well as lateral violence between Indigenous faculty, staff and students is experienced.

There is a sense that Indigenous students and faculty are frequently asked to speak to issues or provide informal advice on various elements of corporate policy, protocol or cultural practices. Individuals are rarely compensated or recognized for their advice or support. Such requests, especially those informal in nature, can also put Indigenous students or faculty in an uncomfortable position, especially when they are asked for their advice or feedback on topics they may not feel designated to speak on. Staff also mentioned that *“they don’t feel like the right resource, because they haven’t sat with Elders. They don’t feel like they should be providing that advice as it is their individual experience, and they don’t speak on behalf of all Indigenous people.”*

- A lack of Indigenous representation – in physical spaces and in numbers of Indigenous faculty and staff, that contribute to feelings of invisibility while navigating University spaces and places
- Indigenous staff experience barriers related to career advancement
- Increased oversight and inclusion of Indigenous peoples and Indigenous content in curriculum, and training for staff and students would positively strengthen relationships
- A division and lack of collaboration exists between the University of Regina and the First Nations University of Canada. As one student reported *“there is a still a line in the sand”* between the two institutions for collaboration to advance reconciliation efforts.

Emergent themes from the two **Faculty and staff focus groups** include:

- Interpersonal dynamics as well as the structure of roles within Indigenous (advisory) committees (example; committees seen as or are more faculty based) are impeding positive relationship building and momentum.
- Perceptions that non-Indigenous faculty members struggle to find ways to include Indigenous themes, world views and content into their courses and may be in need of more direction and collaboration.
- Perceptions that there is no formal “follow-up” or accountability mechanism to ensure each department or faculty is advancing reconciliation and aligning with the goals of the **All Our Relations Plan**. There is a perception that progress in this regard depends on the personal commitment of Deans and that there is varying levels of commitment or interest at this level.
- Feelings that the University is rarely proactive and often too slow to react when issues impacting Indigenous students and faculty are identified. This contributes to a sense of pain and grief, and compounds frustration from the initially identified harm. The need for ‘repairing’ relationships and trust is still felt among respondents who referenced the George Elliot Clark incident.
- A sense of grief and frustration is felt from the loss of Indigenous colleagues and talent over the years. This frustration is exacerbated by the perception that other potential Indigenous scholars or academics may not see the University as desirable place to work or do research.
- Opportunities to connect with more First Nations and Métis communities to collaborate and strategize on how to support the needs of Nations and Indigenous communities to

respond to labour force needs, and accessible options for programming and credential acquisition

- The distinction between ***“Indigenization vs representation are two different things”*** was noted alongside the need to ensure those being tasked with Indigenization have connections to Indigenous community(ies) not Indigenous identity alone.
- Lack of practical know-how from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous faculty in ways to break-down barriers in corporate policies and procedures (e.g., how to articulate and promote Indigenous researchers and their research topics to attract external grants and funding more effectively.)
- The need to recognize the diverse experiences of all Indigenous peoples and the need for space and opportunities for students, staff and faculty whose journey through academia and into the academic workforce may not have been linear. There is a sense that some of the historical challenges faced by Indigenous peoples means that the route to university may not have been direct, and that time spent out in the world before coming back to university should be equally valued when recruiting Indigenous individuals into staff and faculty positions.

Emergent themes from the two **Facilities Management focus group** include:

- Respondents shared a knowledge and intention to learn and understand how to engage Indigenous businesses and labour force, but they are unsure on how to go about it. ***“There is a duty to consult, we want to consult, but we don’t know where to start or how to start”***
- Recruiting Indigenous staff was noted as a challenge, as they pointed towards a gap in the human resources function of the University to support recruitment and retention of Indigenous staff.
- There was a strong sentiment and eagerness of wanting to participate more in Indigenous events on campus to build relationships through personal interactions with Indigenous communities and peoples, but there is uncertainty about whether non-Indigenous staff are or would be welcomed at events.
- There was a strong eagerness to learn all the ways that the department could advance reconciliation and an openness for an objective review of internal policies, procurement policies, business and capital planning and goal identification. There was a sense of not having a single point of contact to help navigate through some of these larger conversations.

Emergent themes from the two **Research focus group** include:

- The University Press was noted as an institutional strength with a big opportunity to further support more Indigenous representation and scholarship, possibly in collaboration with First Nations University of Canada
- Lack of predictable funding is seen as one barrier to bringing more Indigenous content and projects to the press. The paucity of funding also means that Indigenous scholars who support projects related to language revival are often providing their input and services without being fairly and appropriately compensated for their time and contribution.

- Mistrust was noted as a concern to impacting positive relationships, with one respondent noting the University has been culpable and complicit by not addressing Indigenous identity fraud fulsomely
- The burden for Indigenous peoples to support non-Indigenous colleagues to Indigenize curriculum and practices was highlighted, with the suggestion to have an Indigenous chair for Indigenization as a strategy to support the University's efforts
- A need was also identified to support Indigenous researchers accessing grants, funding and pursuing Indigenous research with community. This need was also identified that the community needs to be put first and identify the need. An Indigenous research chair position was highlighted as a potential solution for support.
- More funding opportunities for Indigenous students and scholarship was discussed, linking to a strong theme of the need for the academy to recognize the legitimacy of Indigenous knowledge.

Summary of key themes

Our initial thematic analysis of the combined focus group feedback is as follows:

Mandatory Curriculum

Participants across the focus groups identified the clear need for mandatory Indigenous curriculum. The need here being not only for Indigenous people to see their culture, knowledge systems, and traditions represented in the University's curriculum, but also an educational tool for non-Indigenous peoples to learn from. Participants acknowledged the need for long-term accredited cultural programs for people coming to the University of Regina because Indigenous worldviews need to be enmeshed in every program across the university. A systemic review of first year course materials was recommended. While there's more to be done on curriculum development, a participant acknowledged that: ***"the business program is starting to include Indigenous business cases. That needs to continue, there needs to be more of that. More contemporary curriculum"***. On the land programming was also recommended as an important course offering and way to increase experiential learning opportunities.

Implementing these mandatory Indigenous courses would also help build understanding and better internal relationships between staff and students. It was noted that language-based immersion at the University is another consideration that should be made within a curriculum change and curriculum evaluation. Space(s) at the University for language reclamation are important to those that have provided their feedback.

Clear processes for staff regarding trainings, protocols and meaningful relationship building

Participants, both staff and students, call for proactive initiatives for relationship building between Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff and students. ***"The University needs to get comfortable with the uncomfortable. There is more to building a relationship than a land acknowledgement."*** Many participants spoke to the need for intentionality when it comes to training on protocols and active relationship building and collaboration. A safe space and mentorship program that supports collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous colleagues needs to be spearheaded by the University.

Creating safe spaces for knowledge building and transfer would help alleviate the fear of some faculties to own their need to learn, some participants noted.

While Indigenous people should be given opportunity to lead conversations, some Indigenous staff do not want to carry the burden or be the sole person responsible for educating their colleagues on Indigenous knowledge and relationship building, ***"[There is] burden for Indigenous peoples to continuously support non-Indigenous colleagues to build knowledge and Indigenize. ... If we want to continue and increase the capacity, we need community involvement and outreach, collaborate with communities, we need to bring someone in and pay them full-time (senior and junior level) and further develop the junior person for a transfer of knowledge."***

Systemic change, provide clear pathways for career advancement for Indigenous staff and students

Systemic change that provides a clear pathway for career advancement for Indigenous staff and students is another theme consistent throughout the focus groups. Student participants stated that they do not feel there is enough support available to achieve advancement in their careers. Pathways to support transition from school to career were a big need identified by student participants, ***"There are no long-term supports or processes to advancement. Students are left alone to navigate systems and not given a chance to succeed. There needs to be more hiring of Indigenous students and staff. You are educating the students here, why are you not hiring them as well?"***

It was also identified that there is not enough Indigenous peoples in leadership positions and at decision-making tables. There was significant recognition of the creation of the Office of Indigenous Engagement, and appointment of an Associate Vice-President, however, there is still room for growth and advancement. It was also mentioned that there is a perception Indigenous people at the University aren't making decisions or cannot meaningfully influence decisions. A participant acknowledged, ***"maybe they (Indigenous people) are on committees, but they are not making decisions."***

Staff talked about the same concerns of lack of transitional supports for students, and similarly for themselves, frustration with the lack of pathways for their career advancement. Indigenous staff expressed the feeling that they aren't given a clear opportunity to advance and participate in meaningful career opportunities. The imperative to increase recruitment processes and practices, and then retain Indigenous peoples was also discussed as highlighted in this quote ***"the pathway for advancement [is] unclear. The university invests in personnel, but limited movement forward. There are internal tensions to change but [the school is] resistant. I'm tired of losing colleagues and staying quiet."***

Beyond the checkboxes: provide bottom-up approach to engagement and reconciliation

Focus group feedback indicated that there is a perception that commitment to Indigenous reconciliation is mostly represented at leadership level where committees and advisory councils are formed. Grassroot commitment to working together is notably lacking. Other times, the resources needed by Indigenous faculty to support Indigenous students are often lacking as opposed to the supports available to non-Indigenous faculty members. With the presence of an established committee comes a shift in recognizing individual's inherent responsibility to foster equity amongst

Indigenous and non-Indigenous members of the university. In discussing the functionality of Indigenous representative bodies, people stated that the Indigenous Economic reconciliation is not present on the campus.

Participants also attested to the feeling of being invisible on campus. ***“There is no teeth to any kind of real reconciliation on the campus. It appears to be all for show and the perception is that it is just to check a box. There is limited Indigenous representation in the staff and faculty. All these buildings and places have Indigenous names but doesn’t go any further than that...Change is needed, and it needs to happen now. It all seems performative, performative reconciliation. [There are] check boxes on Indigenous engagement for the sake of following processes.”***

Build partnership and support Nations through capacity development

Participants spoke to the need for partnership with other Indigenous bodies, Nations, businesses as well as need for the University to support nation building through capacity development and educational opportunities. Partnerships with communities will help economic reconciliation, data sharing and mentorship opportunities for students. Participants noted there are Tribal Councils and individual Nations who are interested in partnership, ***“Tribal Councils throughout [the] provinces have businesses and organizations that could work well with the university. The University should create training opportunities for Nation labour force. The University is focused on four-year degree, what about addressing needs of the nations?”***

Participants also identified that there is still disconnect of partnership between First Nation’s University of Canada and U of R. Some Indigenous participants identified that there is a need for the University to build connections with First Nation’s University of Canada to strategize and plan together to create collective progress.

Provide effective cultural support for Indigenous students and staff

The importance of supporting and protecting Indigenous cultures for Indigenous peoples is a theme clearly heard amongst participants. Availability of cultural supports for Indigenous students and staff cannot be overemphasized. Many people spoke to the lack of cultural elements and supports and its effect on them as Indigenous peoples. For many people this supports looks like, request for a ceremony or traditional spaces being met with red tape, funding support, having a cultural week on campus as an educational opportunity and opportunity to celebrate Nations, dedicated spaces for medicine, land-based training as well as collaboration with other organizations including Métis Nations to meet the needs of Métis students and staff. ***“The university needs a bigger ta-tawâw Centre to support students. Far too often other students come into the ta-tawâw Centre to use resources, take food, and drinks from the area. [We need] a cultural centre open to Indigenous students all the time. The OMA program should be made permanent. It provides real value to Indigenous students and helps them to be successful.”***

Students also noted that Indigenous recognition and celebration is encouraging, especially when milestones are completed. They stated that ***“self-identified Indigenous students in the Faculty of Nursing receive feathers or Métis sashes when they graduate. Other faculties and individuals can also apply to the Birds of Prey for feathers. This honour is an independent act of humility, achievement, and celebration”***

OPEN HOUSE



In addition to the tactic of focus groups with a targeted audience, a facilitated open house provided the opportunity for information sharing and dialogue with a large number of interested participants from across the university. More than 150 student and staff engaged with the Castlemain team, the ta-tawâw Student Centre, and the Office of Indigenous Engagement to learn more about the open house and the work being done to develop the Indigenous Engagement Strategic Plan.

The open house was held on February 15th, in the Research and Innovation Atrium from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. Four stations were set up that focused on three to four questions per station around the topics of:

1. Student success
2. Spaces and places
3. Learning and teaching
4. Building community

Participants provided feedback using sticky notes as a user-friendly engagement tool. In addition, students and staff also had the opportunity to provide their thoughts and insights via a QR code, which is currently active.

Summary of key themes

University education as a steppingstone & the need for more financial supports

In general, many participants identified the University as a path towards their career and long-term success, ***“this university is the step towards a higher education that will help me succeed in my Indigenous Justice career.”***

However, there was a recurring theme best identified under the student success topic of the need for more financial support for Indigenous students. This ranged from more scholarships, grants, lower/ “no-cost” tuition, and better promotion of financial supports. A participant mentioned that ***“a mentor should be readily available to help people, particularly those with a lack of resources and support to assist with registering for classes. Finding funding and navigation for courses. As a woman getting out of jail and pursuing further education, I found these things stressful.”***

Experiences of racism, sexism, & discrimination

Participants also provided insight into the barriers experienced on campus including racism, discrimination, lateral violence, and misogyny. Some participants mentioned the need to ***“identify Indigenous champions who are willing to support Indigenous students.”*** Another participant mentioned that ***“I felt community engagement was really poor, which made it hard to meet people.”*** Another mentioned specific racism in the form of dismissal and hostility, ***“The current/reality is that religious ideas and perspectives are often dismissed (at best) or met with near-hostility (at worst). Especially in class/lab/ Obviously not welcoming.”***

Need for more Indigenous representation on campus

Participants provided comments related to what a welcoming campus looks like. Some ideas mentioned included more Indigenous representation and visibility and art at all University campuses, and suggested decolonizing library classification systems. One participant mentioned the idea of ***"[having] a welcoming ceremony for "newcomers". I have worked and studied w/ international students they come to Canada with negative stereotypes and have bias before they get into country. This would make more welcome for everyone as we face similar challenges."***

Another participant questioned, ***"regarding ta-tawâw, as a white man am I welcome? If yes, how do we deal with situations where both of us become uncomfortable because of our unfortunate shared history?"***

Several participants acknowledged that more Indigenous professors and representation is needed on campus. There was also a recurring idea that there should be a requirement for Indigenous professors and students in "EVERY" department. It was also highlighted that more Indigenous staff need to be on campus, which was further expanded that ***"Indigenous staff need to also be teaching in non-Indigenous subjects"***.

It was also mentioned that there needs to be more classes about Métis culture, valuing Indigenous community-based research, consulting with Elders on academic matters, and in general incorporating Indigenous perspective in all classes. Another participant mentioned the need for ***"classes on UNDRIP and how it will be tangibly integrated into day-to-day life."***

Wanting to learn more; about Indigenous Peoples, culture & history

Overall, there is a willingness and significant interest among participants to learn more about Indigenous history and culture. A key open house theme that was emphasized by all participants that answered the community engagement questions, is an openness to learn more about the institutions neighbouring Indigenous Nations. Participants provided examples of ways they were interested in learning more such as self-paced and instructed language modules, transportation to attend annual Treaty 4 gatherings, land-based experiences, and for Elder/storytelling and oral history to be taken seriously ***"as legitimate knowledge and learning practices"***.

One participant also mentioned that ***"Indigenous culture needs to be central here"*** and noted cultural practices such as Métis fiddle playing & dancing, cooking, Powwow's, smudging /ceremonial practices, round dances etc.

Another participant mentioned, ***"In my first term I did the 4season [of reconciliation] course. I learned something about Indigenous history in Canada. But then I watched the documentary by Tasha Hubbard 'birth of a family' and learned so much more. I think history should be addressed in ways that anybody [can] understand and connect."***

Suggestions for learning opportunities, new courses, and Indigenizing courses

Building on the interest in learning more about Indigenous culture and history, participants also identified a number of courses and learning opportunities they would be interested in taking if offered. Specific courses identified as potential interest included: Indigenous specific human justice/law, Indigenous medicine and healing, better access to Cree speaking tutors, more Elders on campus, intergenerational trauma, and trauma informed care. To further 'de-colonize curriculum to be less Eurocentric' participants

mentioned the need for *“systemic review of course materials and unconscious bias training included in sessional and faculty handbooks, something they can reference when needed. This would help put an end to bias students experience in classes and therefore make it more welcoming.”*

Increasing Indigenous partnerships and collaboration

Throughout the open house stations, there were several mentions of the First Nations University of Canada. Participants identified that more collaboration was needed, and that “ending social exclusion” was needed. There was a sense that the University of Regina shouldn’t *“rely on First Nations University of Canada for Indigenous initiatives.”*

Additional ideas identified the need for more collaboration and relationship building with Indigenous peoples and communities near the University. This included more partnerships with communities and Indigenous businesses, land-based experiences, attending Indigenous community events and activities and to *“partner with more Tribal Councils, FSIN, Band Level governments through partnerships, co-op placement. Something like the executive partnership program at JSGS (Johnson Shoyama).”*

These ideas were mentioned and agreed with by many participants.

ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS

Having one-on-one conversations with key staff stakeholders can add another layer of depth to themes that emerge from broader engagement tactics such as the open house and survey. So far, four one-on-one interviews were held on February 14 and 16, with:

- Two Indigenous staff,
- 1 Indigenous student.
- 1 staff member working directly with Indigenous communities and students.

Summary of key themes

Inclusion as a barrier and lack of Indigenous representation

One of the participants noted the systemic racism that is experienced by students, faculty and staff on campus. There was a sense that visual representation of Indigenous peoples and cultures is lacking, and there are not enough spaces that are safe and welcoming to Indigenous peoples on campus. A few of the participants noted the need for Indigenous faculty in classrooms, as well as in research positions and organizational leadership within the institution. Further to the lack of representation, is a lack of data about Indigenous representation within staff positions that is accessible and transparent to other faculty and staff members. One participant noted that [Indigenous] students from First Nations University of Canada *“don’t feel comfortable coming here (the University of Regina campus facilities)”*.

Burden of Indigenous colleagues to Indigenize courses and practices

Participants spoke about the *“burden on Indigenous colleagues for information and protocols. Staff, and faculty often come to Indigenous staff and ask for help in connecting and accessing ceremonial plants and medicines”*; and that the acknowledgement just because a staff or faculty member is

Indigenous, does not mean they might have the capacity or 'place' to be advising on certain practices or protocols. The importance of having clear and accessible policies and/or guidelines and communications to combat cultural appropriation was additionally noted.

Increasing Indigenous research, community collaboration and partnerships

A theme of the need for research supports to improve [external] Indigenous engagement is needed, and this could be led by an Indigenous research chair to support capacity building in scholarship and Indigenous led research initiatives. Seemingly correlated to this research need, is the opportunity to increase partnerships, including MOU's, with more Indigenous communities and organizations. Building research capacity and recruitment within Indigenous communities, including having communities identify their research needs, and being adaptive to the unique complexities of each community/partner.

Increasing Indigenous student supports

In addition to expanding research opportunities and supports for students, participants also noted that transition programs for students coming from First Nations reserves are needed. Other suggestions included digital literacy classes for Indigenous students, increasing flexibility around scholarships, funding and grant opportunities to place less emphasis on previous education and academic performance for a more equity driven approach. The website was said to be cumbersome to navigate and a revised website should increase the visibility of services and supports for students.

Opportunities to engage in one-on-one conversations by request continue to be welcomed.

VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES



Ten virtual engagements with staff, students and alumni were hosted during the week of March 20 to 24, 2023. A total of 71 participants registered for the virtual engagements.

Each participant group had two opportunities to participate, on different days, and times to maximize opportunities. Once registered, participants also received email reminders.

The open house was an extension of the focus groups. Participants were encouraged to share their opinions on the current strengths and challenges related to Indigenous participation and community engagement, as well as what areas or actions could be improved. Data analysis will occur at the conclusion of these events.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Hearing from and meaningfully engaging community is crucial in achieving a well-rounded understanding of the opportunities for the University of Regina. Work is underway to connect with Nations and Indigenous community leaders identified by the project team to schedule virtual and in-person engagement.

There is intent to schedule at least one-day in-person in Regina to meet with urban Treaty 4 Nation representatives, Elders, and Indigenous community leaders. There is also the intent schedule one-on-

one interviews and virtual opportunities with Nation education coordinators and interested participants to understand their needs. The questions will focus on how the university can be in service to their communities, and what actions can be taken to re-build relationships and collaboration.

COMMUNICATIONS OVERVIEW



Throughout the engagement phase of the project, significant communications support has been utilized to promote and provide awareness. The communication tools and supporting materials continue to:

- share information about the need and role of an Indigenous Engagement Strategic Plan,
- inform engagement participants of the opportunities to share their views and perspectives towards developing an Indigenous Engagement Strategic Plan, and
- encourage participation in engagement opportunities.

Working directly with the Office of Indigenous Engagement, the University of Regina communications, and First Nations University of Canada communications, when appropriate, various communications opportunities have been leveraged including the creation of a web page and social media.

The creation of the web page has provided the necessary transparency to ensure an open, collaborative process. Information about the survey and links to the upcoming engagements have provided clear process and engagement opportunities available.

Promotion of the open house included:

- Posters distributed through the ta-tawâw Student Centre, Students Union boards, First Nations University of Canada, Johnson Shoyama School of Public Policy, Faculty of Social Work and Student Wellness Centre.
- Social media posts for Instagram and Facebook were distributed to the University of Regina Communications team for distribution starting Feb 3. Additional social content was provided to the First Nations University of Canada and ta-tawâw Student Centre to amplify participation and promote the open house.
- The webpage included a narrative iterating the importance of engaging to develop an Indigenous Engagement Strategic Plan, dates for engagement opportunities, how their input will be used, and next steps.

For the focus groups, targeted email invitations were distributed to all deans, faculty and staff of the University of Regina. Follow up communication invitations were shared with a variety of interested participants that reached out following the closing of the survey.

In addition, individual invitations were also distributed to interested participants from the following faculties and campus community:

- Vice-President of Research
- ta-tawâw Student Centre
- Student Wellness Centre
- Social Work
- Luther College
- University Communications

- First Nations University of Canada students' association
- Johnson Shoyama School of Public Policy
- Students Union – Advocacy group
- Students Union Indigenous Sovereignty Working Group
- La Cite Francophone
- University Diversity, Equity and Inclusion group
- Science - Chemistry/Biochemistry
- Gabriel Dumont Institute
- History
- Facilities Management Team
- SUNTEP

Promotion of the virtual engagements included invitations to First Nations University of Canada student association, University of Regina Students Union, and alumni. Social media promotion was also used leading up to and during engagement.

Communications activities will continue throughout the project to ensure clear, transparent and open process that everyone feels welcome and safe to participate.

NEXT STEPS:



Significant interest in participating in the engagement process to develop the Indigenous Engagement Strategic Plan has been encouraging. Engagement related to the development of the Indigenous Engagement Strategic Plan has exceeded expectations and resulted in unexpected quantities of valuable qualitative data. There is clear demonstration this work is timely and welcome.

Engagement opportunities, such as community opportunities and one-on-ones continue to be encouraged to ensure fulsome and meaningful engagement. As an engagement best practice, having an open door for participation is the best way to create and foster respectful relations, and ensure participants feel heard and valued.

A number of participants have voiced their appreciation for the ***“opportunity to share their experience and to feel heard for the first time in a long time,” and that they are hopeful that “this plan will signify real change on the campus”.***

Working thoughtfully and respectfully of Indigenous people and Nations' time, it is a best practice to provide an opportunity for a feedback loop. This engagement process allows Indigenous participants the opportunity to review a reflections document that could identify high level themes/actions that will be included in the final report. This allows Indigenous participants to clarify any comments and ensure the reflections gathered are accurate. This feedback loop is necessary with building positive, respectful and productive relationships. Therefore, to further support the ongoing engagement and feedback look, a one-month extension to the delivery of the final report could be necessary.