



**2025** | **MAY**  
14 - 15 | **REGINA,**  
**SASKATCHEWAN**

# NATIONAL BUILDING RECONCILIATION FORUM

Responsibility as Reconciliation:

*Relational Accountability*

## SUMMARY REPORT

The 2025 National Building  
Reconciliation Forum is  
presented in partnership with



**Universities  
Canada.  
Universités  
Canada.**



**FIRST NATIONS  
UNIVERSITY  
OF CANADA**



**University  
of Regina**

**50  
YEARS**





# TERRITORIAL *Acknowledgement*

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## FIRST NATIONS UNIVERSITY OF CANADA

The First Nations University of Canada acknowledges the land on which its Regina campus is situated as the atim kâ-mihkosit (Red Dog) Urban Reserve, Star Blanket Cree Nation and Treaty 4 Territory. Our Saskatoon campus situated on the asimakaniseekan askiy Urban Reserve and our Northern Campus in Prince Albert, are both located in Treaty 6 Territory.

Acknowledging territory is a way of showing recognition of and respect for Indigenous People and is recognition of their presence both in the past and the present. Recognition and respect are essential elements of establishing healthy, reciprocal relations, which are key to reconciliation.

## UNIVERSITY OF REGINA

The University of Regina and its federated colleges are on Treaty 4 and Treaty 6 territories — the homelands of the nêhiyawak, Anihšînāpēk, Dakota, Lakota, Nakoda peoples, and Michif/Métis nation.

We recognize that, as an institution founded by settlers, we benefit from being on this land. We are grateful for the privilege to learn, teach, and work here. We demonstrate our commitment to reconciliation by incorporating Indigenous knowledge and world views in our research, teaching, and studies to ensure that there are increased economic, social, and creative opportunities for current and future generations. It is our responsibility to strengthen relationships with Indigenous communities and build a more inclusive future.



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# WELCOME FROM THE *Governor General*

**HER EXCELLENCY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE MARY SIMON**

Governor General and Commander-in-Chief of Canada



THE GOVERNOR GENERAL • LA GOUVERNEURE GÉNÉRALE

## **Message from the Governor General 9<sup>th</sup> National Building Reconciliation Forum**

I am pleased to convey my warmest greetings to everyone gathered for the 9<sup>th</sup> National Building Reconciliation Forum (NBRF) co-hosted by the First Nations University of Canada and the University of Regina.

As a proud Inuk and as governor general, I have seen first-hand the positive impacts of the time and energy invested toward reconciliation. I am particularly optimistic for the future when I see young people and post-secondary institutions engage in initiatives such as this forum.

This year marks a decade since the release of the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada's 94 Calls to Action*, which sparked an awakening that is reshaping our nation. Since then, we have made phenomenal strides on the path to reconciliation, but much remains to be done as we continue to write this new chapter of our collective history.

I am inspired by your commitment to taking action and I have great faith in the unique insights you will bring to these discussions.

I wish you an enjoyable and productive event.

Mary Simon

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OTTAWA • CANADA • K1A 0A1 • WWW.GG.CA

# WELCOME FROM *The Presidents*

Mizowaykomiguk paypomwayotung

**DR. JACQUELINE OTTMANN**

President, First Nations University of Canada

**DR. JEFF KESHEN**

President and Vice-Chancellor, University of Regina

First Nations University of Canada (FNUiv) and the University of Regina are honoured to have been chosen by Universities Canada to co-host the 2025 National Building Reconciliation Forum in Treaty 4 Territory, and to welcome Forum participants to the home of the nêhiyawak, Anihšīnāpēk, Dakota, Lakota, and Nakoda peoples, and the homeland of the Michif/Métis nation.

2025 marks a decade since the release of the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC).

As presidents of our respective universities, we recognize this pivotal moment in our shared journey toward advancing reconciliation, as highlighted in the TRC's 94 Calls to Action. This anniversary year – and the Building Reconciliation Forum in particular – is an opportunity for us not only to reinvigorate dialogue, but also to take meaningful steps forward in implementing these vital Calls to Action across campuses and communities nationwide.

We invite university leaders, chancellors, Indigenous representatives, student advocates, and scholars from across Canada to unite in a collaborative, experiential Forum dedicated to expanding our understanding of and commitment to Indigenization, decolonization, and reconciliation. Together, we aim to address these essential areas, emphasizing the responsibility of higher education institutions to listen deeply, collaborate, and build robust partnerships in our quest for systemic change.

Reconciliation based on reciprocal truth-telling is a responsibility. For too long Indigenous people have carried the “reconciliation load” and have been vulnerable, exposed in their truths. We have to share the responsibility of creating and sustaining good relations, and one way of truly beginning the reconciliation journey is for non-Indigenous peoples to express their truths of reconciliation progress or successes – if there are any. “We can't change what we don't acknowledge.” These honest declarations have the potential of opening the doors of sustainable action. It is imperative that universities embrace this accountability, working alongside Indigenous leaders and communities to cultivate trust and mutually respectful relationships that transform our practices in post-secondary education, making them more inclusive of Indigenous peoples and their knowledge systems, while dismantling barriers that stand in the way.

The long-standing relationship between FNUiv and the University of Regina is a concrete example of reconciliACTION. FNUiv is a First Nation-owned and operated postsecondary institution with a national mandate that is academically integrated with – but operationally autonomous from – the University of Regina. Since 1976, the two institutions have together worked in partnership to deliver high-quality academic programming for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students alike. The University of Regina recognizes the inherent right to education for Indigenous peoples and consequently supports FNUiv in achieving full academic autonomy. Actions such as this strengthen and contribute to reconciliation efforts across the country.

Our Forum promises to be enriching, featuring keynote addresses from distinguished commissioners of the TRC, Dr. Marie Wilson OC and Chief Wilton Littlechild CC, alongside valuable insights from survivors, Elders, educators, artists, and other voices who will help guide our discussions on how to actively and effectively engage with the Calls to Action.

We warmly welcome you to join us in this crucial undertaking as we explore innovative and productive approaches to decolonizing education, Indigenizing our institutions, and advancing the TRC's vision for reconciliation.

Let us recommit ourselves to this important work, recognizing our responsibility to honour the inherent rights, histories, cultures, lived experiences, and sophisticated and complex philosophies and intellect of Indigenous peoples through genuine actions and lasting changes.

The 2025 National Building Reconciliation Forum honours the life and work of Mazina Giizhik (Calvin Murray Sinclair) who as the lead commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission—with commissioners Dr. Wilson and Chief Littlechild—listened, over the course of six years, to harrowing testimony from more than 6,500 students who attended Canada's residential schools for Indigenous children. The TRC, with its final report and 94 Calls to Action, led the way in creating safe spaces for truth-telling and authored a pathway towards real and lasting reconciliation.

# EXECUTIVE *Summary*



The 2025 National Building Reconciliation Forum centred on the theme ‘Responsibility as Reconciliation: *Relational Accountability*,’ positioning reconciliation as a shared, reciprocal responsibility that demands authentic action and accountability from non-Indigenous institutions, particularly in higher education. This event was one of the largest and highest-attended in the NBRF’s 10-year history, drawing 250 participants from almost 60 post-secondary institutions across Canada, ranging from British Columbia to Newfoundland and the Yukon. Attendees included university presidents, senior leadership, Indigenous leaders, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, student advocates, academics, and community members. The Forum focused on moving beyond symbolic gestures to initiating and sustaining systemic change by weaving together cultural practices, powerful keynotes from TRC Commissioners and survivors, and actionable discussions on embedding Indigenous governance, knowledge, and perspectives into university policy, curriculum, and leadership.

## OVERVIEW

The 9th Annual National Building Reconciliation Forum was a collaborative, experiential gathering dedicated to expanding understanding and commitment to Indigenous engagement, decolonization, and reconciliation within the Canadian post-secondary sector. Co-hosted by the First Nations University of Canada (FNUUniv) and the University of Regina, the Forum served as a vital platform for critical discussions on how to sustain and deepen reconciliation efforts. The overarching purpose was to connect Indigenous and university communities to facilitate dialogue and drive meaningful systemic change, reinforcing the responsibility of higher education leaders to listen deeply, collaborate, and build robust partnership with Indigenous peoples in relation to the TRC Calls to Action. The Forum program weaved cultural practices—including pipe ceremony with male, female, and Two-Spirit pipes, hide scraping, morning honour songs, and traditional workshops—alongside keynote addresses, panels, interactive sessions, and artistic expressions grounded in Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing to foster dialogue and commitments to relational accountability.

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Attendance:** Welcomed 250 participants, including 8 Presidents, representing almost 60 post-secondary institutions across 10 provinces and territories.
- **Theme Significance:** Emphasized ‘Responsibility as Reconciliation: *Relational Accountability*’ on the 10th anniversary of the TRC Calls to Action.
- **Ceremonial Grounding:** The Forum was grounded in Indigenous traditions, starting with a Pipe Ceremony and morning honour songs, and included the presentation of the Ceremonial Bundle.
- **Distinguished Speakers:** Featured powerful keynotes from residential school survivor Eugene Arcand and former TRC Commissioners Dr. Marie Wilson and Chief Wilton Littlechild. Dr. Verna St. Denis addressed systemic anti-Indigenous racism in education.
- **Accountability Focus:** Panels and banquet discussions focused heavily on accountability, governance (featuring FNUUniv and U of R Board Chairs Sherry Saevil and Cadmus Delorme), and the necessity of structural, not just symbolic, change.
- **Reconciliation in the Community:** Participants toured the Orange Buffalo Lodge, a supportive housing initiative in Regina, and visited North Central Family Centre, a community-built and led centre, demonstrating a tangible community action in response to the TRC.
- **Cultural Engagement:** Included hands-on cultural activities such as a traditional hide scraping workshop led by Peter Brass and an interactive “Reconciliation on Canvas” art workshop led by Colleen Charles.
- **Artistic Reflection:** Featured performances by Juno Award-winning artist William Prince at the banquet and a closing spoken word performance by Zoey Roy, with a visual summary captured by graphic artist Delaney Cox.

## STRATEGIC TAKEAWAYS

The Forum discussions led to several strategic imperatives for the post-secondary sector:

- **Structural Change over Symbolism:** Reconciliation requires universities to move definitively from symbolic gestures toward deep, structural transformation and tangible *reconciliACTION*.
- **Weaving Indigenous Philosophies and Practices throughout the entire university:** There must be institutional commitment to embed Indigenous knowledges, worldviews, and governance structures into university policy, curriculum, and leadership practices.
- **Accountability Mechanisms:** Universities must strengthen accountability mechanisms that are specifically aligned with the TRC Calls to Action and Indigenous knowledge systems.
- **Reciprocal Partnerships:** Institutions are urged to foster reciprocal, long-term partnerships with Indigenous communities, emphasizing mutual respect and trust.
- **Sector-Wide Progress:** Universities Canada members and the broader post-secondary sector are encouraged to actively adopt and share best practices derived from the Forum to ensure a collective, deepening commitment to Indigenous equity and systemic transformation.
- **Indigenous Peoples' Positionality:** It is also important to acknowledge the unique positionality (legal, moral, and ethical) that Indigenous people have as the First Peoples of the lands that are now bounded by what is now called Canada. Measuring and sharing the successes related to TRC and commitment to Indigenous Peoples are keys to enduring progress and strengthened relationships.



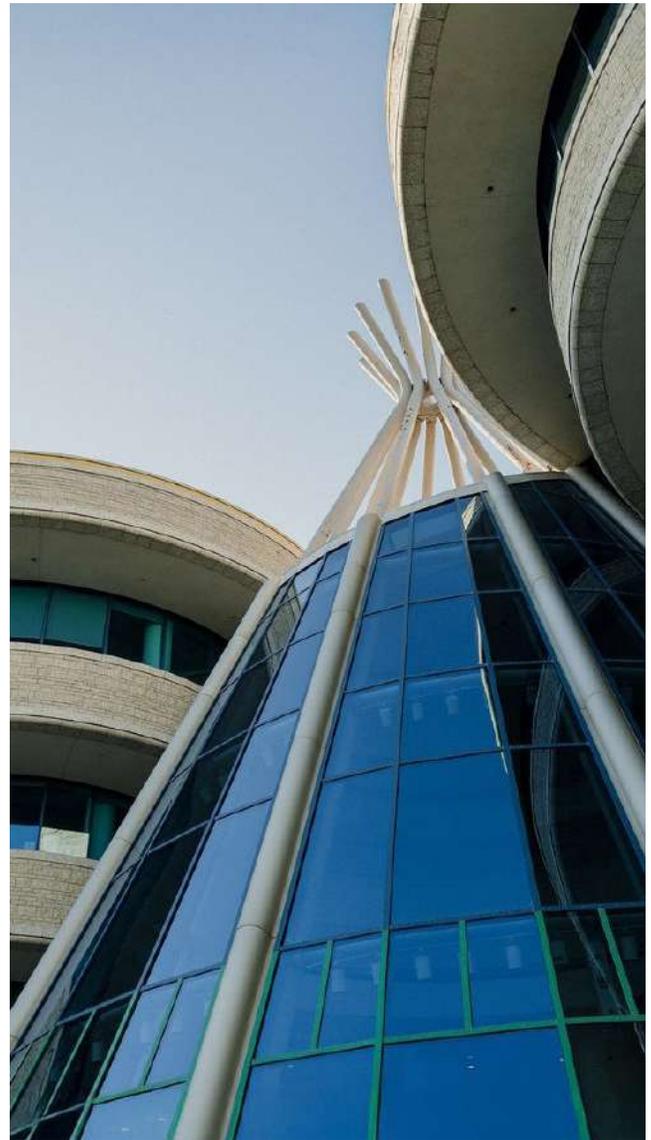
# SUMMARY *Overview*

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The 9th Annual National Building Reconciliation Forum, held from May 14–15, 2025, with a pre-conference day on May 13, was co-hosted by the First Nations University of Canada and the University of Regina. The theme ‘Responsibility as Reconciliation: *Relational Accountability*,’ emphasized that reconciliation is a reciprocal journey rooted in action and shared responsibility, coinciding with the 10th anniversary of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action. Nearly 60 post-secondary institutions gathered alongside Indigenous leaders, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and community members to advance reconciliation in higher education. The forum fostered dialogue and commitments to relational accountability by blending ceremonial practices, keynote addresses, panels, interactive sessions, and artistic expressions.

## PRE-CONFERENCE DAY — May 13, 2025

The pre-conference activities set a foundational tone for the Forum. This day included the National Indigenous University Senior Leaders’ Association (NIUSLA) 2025 Summit which focused on Indigenous strategies, systemic change, and accountability within post-secondary institutions. Participants were offered campus tours of both the University of Regina and First Nations University of Canada. The day featured a Welcome Reception where renowned Indigenous Chef Kirk Ermine from Sturgeon Lake First Nation presented a selection of canapés accompanied by narratives about the traditional ingredients used. A book signing session with authors Dr. Blair Stonechild and Dr. Marie Wilson was held, and the day concluded with a Full Moon Ceremony led by Elder Shelley Belhumeur.



## DAY 1 — May 14, 2025

Day 1 focused on truth-telling, reflection, and setting the historical context for the work ahead.

- **Opening Ceremonies:** The day began with a Pipe Ceremony, followed by a morning honour song led by Everet “Chase” Sayer, Dinaye Sayer, and Cree Sayer, and opening remarks from university Presidents, Dr. Jacqueline Ottmann and Dr. Jeff Keshen and Indigenous leaders.
- **Keynotes and Reflections:** Attendees heard a powerful keynote address from residential school survivor and advocate Eugene Arcand, sharing his lived experiences and teachings. Former TRC Commissioners Dr. Marie Wilson and Chief Wilton Littlechild reflected on the decade-long journey since the release of the TRC’s 94 Calls to Action.
- **Interactive Sessions:** Interactive tipi sessions were held, which explored crucial topics such as Indigenous knowledges, treaties, and the history of the relationship between Indigenous peoples and post-secondary education.
- **Cultural Workshop:** FNUniv Art Collections Manager Peter Brass led a traditional hide scraping and tanning workshop, demonstrating the significance of Indigenous knowledge, cultural resilience, and sustainability.
- **Evening Banquet:** The day concluded with the Reflections on Reconciliation banquet, where FNUniv Board Chair Sherry Saevil and U of R Board Chair Cadmus Delorme discussed the essential role of university boards in supporting, sustaining, and embedding Indigenous perspectives into institutional governance. The banquet featured a musical performance by Juno Award-winning Cree/Ojibwe performing artist William Prince.



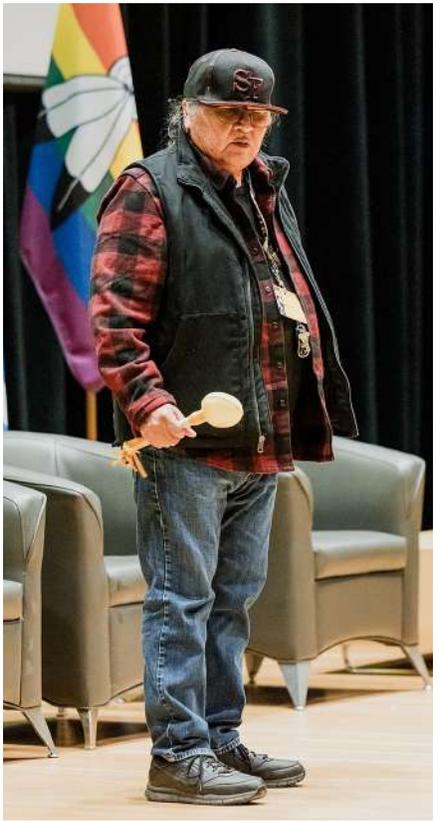


## DAY 2 — May 15, 2025

Day 2 emphasized accountability, action, and planning for the future.

- **Morning Opening:** The day began with a prayer by Knowledge Keepers Joely BigEagle-Kequahtoway, and a morning honour song shared by Preston Littlelent, from the U of R ta-tawâw Student Centre.
- **Keynote on Systemic Change:** Dr. Verna St. Denis, a leading scholar, delivered a keynote on anti-Indigenous racism and the practical steps universities must take to address the TRC implementation gaps.
- **ReconciliACTION Panel:** A “reconciliACTION Panel” discussion focused on shifting from dialogue to tangible action. This session, led by Lori Campbell (U of R Associate Vice-President, Indigenous Engagement), featured University presidents Dr. Jacqueline Ottmann and Dr. Jeff Keshen, alongside Dr. Edward Doolittle and Dr. Chris Yost.
- **Community Visit:** Attendees engaged in a community visit to witness “reconciliation in action” having lunch at the North Central Family Centre (NCFC) and touring the Orange Buffalo Lodge, a 30-unit affordable housing development with a community hub.
- **Embodied Reconciliation:** Afternoon sessions utilized art for embodied reconciliation, including an interactive workshop, “Reconciliation on Canvas,” led by Colleen Charles, focusing on healing through art by exploring historical and contemporary Indigenous contexts.
- **Closing:** The Forum concluded with a spoken word performance by Zoey Roy, weaving together themes of Indigenous knowledge, identity, and reconciliation, followed by a visual conference summary captured by graphic artist Delaney Cox.





## KEY TAKEAWAYS

The core lessons emphasized throughout the Forum are critical for the post-secondary sector:

- **Accountability in Governance:** Reconciliation requires rigorous accountability structures rooted in Indigenous knowledge systems, ensuring that commitments are institutionalized and measurable.
- **Tangible Action:** Universities must move beyond rhetorical or symbolic gestures toward demonstrable reconciliACTION—embedding TRC Calls to Action directly into university governance, curriculum, and policy.
- **Reciprocal Relationships:** Partnerships with Indigenous communities must be reciprocal, long-term, and specifically oriented toward achieving systemic change within the institution.
- **Cultural Vitality:** Indigenous ways of being, knowing, and doing—including storytelling, ceremony, and cultural practices—are recognized as vital and non-negotiable components of meaningful reconciliation dialogues and progress.
- **Shared Best Practices:** The post-secondary sector is encouraged to adopt and share successful strategies from the Forum to deepen commitments to Indigenous leadership, equity, and systemic transformation.



# VISUAL Recordings

## VISUAL RECORDINGS

Throughout the two-day Forum, artist Delaney Cox created two beautiful pieces of graphic art—one for Day 1 and one for Day 2—that visually captured and wove together the powerful stories shared and the critical lessons learned during the event. These visual recordings served as a comprehensive, artistic summary, ensuring that the collective wisdom and commitments generated by the participants were captured in a creative and enduring manner.

### DAY 1 - Visual Recording by Delaney Cox



### DAY 2 - Visual Recording by Delaney Cox



# CEREMONIAL *Bundle*

The Ceremonial Bundle, which travels to each National Building Reconciliation Forum, symbolizes the enduring commitment and shared responsibility across institutions. Laurentian University was entrusted to care for a ceremonial paddle and moccasins (previously gifted from Western University) until the start of the 2025 National Building Reconciliation Forum. President Lynn Wells and Associate Vice-President of Academic and Indigenous Programs Dominic Beaudry travelled with the ceremonial items from Sudbury, Ontario to Regina, Saskatchewan to present these ceremonial items to First Nations University of Canada President Ottmann and University of Regina President Keshen during the Forum's opening.

In addition to the paddle and moccasins, Laurentian added a rattle to the bundle. This year, at the suggestion of Elder Maria Campbell, the organizing committee added a birch bark basket to the bundle. Birch trees are prevalent in Treaty 4 and offer us many gifts. The skillfully crafted birch bark basket was added to symbolize a space for gathering the wisdom and teachings shared at the Forum. This birch basket will serve as a symbol for collecting all the teachings from every NBRF gathering as the Ceremonial Bundle moves from Treaty 4 to the next host institution in 2026.



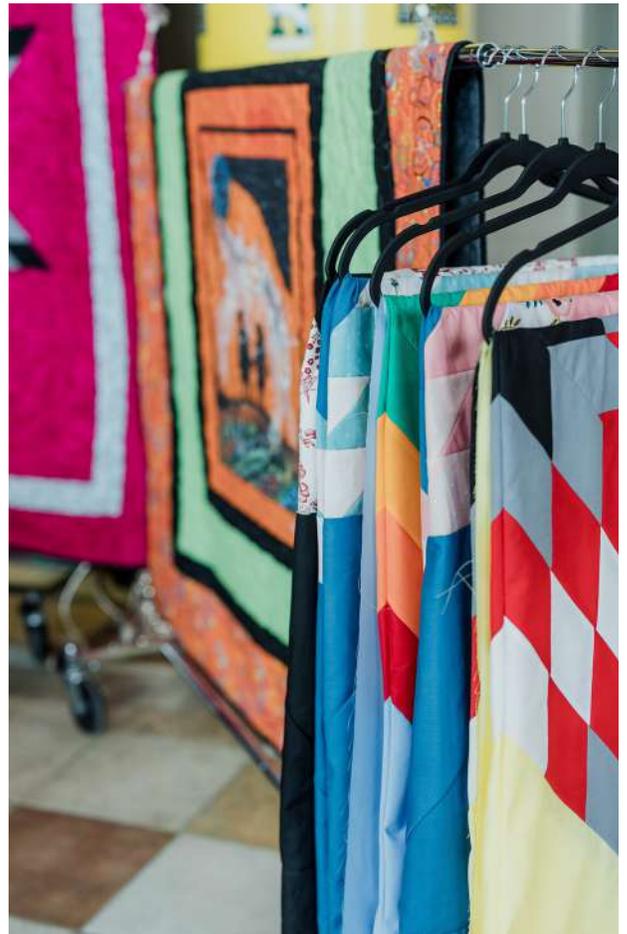
# MAKERS' Market



Indigenous artisans were invited to showcase their talents at the NBRF Makers' Market hosted at FNU on day 1 and U of R on day 2.

This year's Forum also created a commemorative t-shirt showcasing John Brady McDonald's Just Stick Feathers on It artwork and conference graphic.

Forum attendees were able to support local Indigenous economic development while they engaged in conversations about the importance of truth and reconciliation in post-secondary institutions.



# SPECIAL Recognition

This event would not have been possible without the countless hours our dedicated team members contributed to planning and executing the 2025 National Building Reconciliation Forum. Special recognition is deserved for:

## First Nations University of Canada

Elder Shelley Belhumeur  
Elder Maria Campbell  
Elder Margaret Keewatin  
Elder Dennis Omeasoo  
Elder William Ratfoot  
Chef Kirk Ermine

### *FNUniv Planning Committee:*

- Peter Brass
- Kristin Francis
- Brenda Green
- Gord Hunchak
- Trina Joseph
- Roland Kaye
- Jacqueline Ottmann
- Rebecca Morris-Hurl
- Bonnie Rockthunder
- Meika Taylor
- Debbie Venne

## University of Regina

Knowledge Keeper Joely BigEagle-Kequahtoway  
Knowledge Keeper Preston Littlelent

### *U of R Planning Committee:*

- John Bird
- David Boys
- Lori Campbell
- Virginia Carpenter
- Vivienne Dawson
- Mindy Ellis
- david Gregory
- Sandra King Hendricks
- Sandy Pipko
- Lindsay Robertson
- Veronica Santafe
- Rebecca Sparvier
- Andrea Sterzuk
- Claudia Whitehawk



# MEDIA Roundup



Category	Source	Published	Title
Pre-Event (Institutional)	FNUniv Newsroom U of R Newsroom	November 12, 2025	FNUniv and U of R to Host National Gathering to Advance Reconciliation in Canadian Post-Secondary Education FNUniv and U of R to Host National Gathering to Advance Reconciliation in Canadian Post-Secondary Education
Pre-Event	Universities Canada	November 12, 2024	First Nations University of Canada and University of Regina to host national gathering to advance reconciliation in Canadian post-secondary education
Pre-Event	MBC Radio	November 12, 2025	The 2025 National Building Reconciliation Forum will take place in Regina
Pre-Event	Education News Canada	November 14, 2025	FNUniv and U of R to Host National Gathering to Advance Reconciliation in Canadian Post-Secondary Education
Pre-Event	NationTalk	November 12, 2025	FNUniv and U of R to Host National Gathering to Advance Reconciliation in Canadian Post-Secondary Education
Pre-Event (Institutional)	FNUniv Newsroom U of R Newsroom	February 26, 2025	Registration open for the 2025 National Building Reconciliation Forum Registration Open for the 2025 National Building Reconciliation Forum
Pre-Event	Education News Canada	February 27, 2025	Registration open for the 2025 National Building Reconciliation Forum
Pre-Event	Indigenous Lands & Resources Today	February 27, 2025	Registration open for the 2025 National Building Reconciliation Forum – ENC
Pre-Event	NationTalk	February 28, 2025	Registration Open for the 2025 National Building Reconciliation Forum
Pre-Event (Institutional)	FNUniv Newsroom U of R Newsroom	May 13, 2025	First Nations University of Canada and University of Regina to host the 2025 National Building Reconciliation Forum First Nations University of Canada and the University of Regina to host the 2025 National Building Reconciliation Forum
Post-Event (External)	RPIRG	May 14, 2025	RPIRG Supports Four Students to Attend National Building Reconciliation Forum
Post-Event (External)	SaskToday (Regina Today)	May 15, 2025	U of R, FNUniv host National Building Reconciliation Forum
Post-Event (External)	CTV News Regina	May 15, 2025	'ReconciliACTION': What is it and how can you take part?
Post-Event (External)	CTV News Regina	May 15, 2025	'The real truth': First Nations University hosts reconciliation forum in Regina
Post-Event (Institutional)	U of R Recap	June 5, 2025	Responsibility as Reconciliation: FNUniv and U of R Host Reconciliation Forum
Post-Event (External)	Education News Canada	June 9, 2025	Responsibility as Reconciliation: FNUniv and U of R Host Reconciliation Forum
Post-Event (Institutional)	FNUniv Recap	June 20, 2025	The National Reconciliation Building Forum 2025: A Partnership for Reflection on the TRC's Calls to Action
Social Media	FNUniv Facebook	May 12, 2025 May 13, 2025 May 16, 2025	First Nations University of Canada's Post First Nations University of Canada's Post First Nations University of Canada's Post

# FEEDBACK *Summary*

The 2025 National Building Reconciliation Forum (NBRF) received overwhelmingly positive feedback from participants, highlighting the event's emotional depth, educational value, and community-building impact. The survey responses reflect a strong appreciation for the speakers, cultural elements, and opportunities for connection, while also offering constructive suggestions for future forums.

## Key Highlights

- **Powerful Speaker Reflections:** Attendees were deeply moved by keynote speakers, especially Eugene Arcand and the Truth and Reconciliation Commissioners, Dr. Marie Wilson and Chief Wilton Littlechild. Their personal stories and reflections on residential schools were described as transformative, authentic, and essential to the reconciliation journey.
- **Ceremony & Cultural Elements:** Ceremonies such as the pipe and moon ceremonies, and symbolic acts like the passing of the canoe paddle, were praised for grounding the event in Indigenous traditions and emphasizing the continuity of reconciliation work.
- **Learning & Academic Engagement:** Sessions led by scholars like Dr. Blair Stonechild, Dr. Kathy Walker, and others were noted for their interactivity and relevance. Experiential learning activities, such as hide tanning by Peter Brass, were especially impactful.
- **Community & Connection:** The forum fostered a strong sense of camaraderie, with participants valuing informal moments of sharing, laughter, and storytelling. The setting at First Nations University was repeatedly praised for its beauty and significance.

## Suggestions for Future Forums

Participants offered thoughtful recommendations, including:

- Greater involvement from senior university leadership, especially non-Indigenous leaders.
- More breakout sessions focused on practical reconciliation strategies.

- Increased student participation and hands-on cultural workshops.
- Tangible action plans and follow-up on reconciliation efforts.
- Improved accessibility, time management, and hybrid (Zoom) options.
- Consideration of language accessibility, especially for events hosted in Quebec.

## Standout Moments

- Honouring of Indigenous leaders and shared leadership between university presidents.
- Artistic elements like live session graphic recordings by Delaney Cox and the musical performance by William Prince.
- Field trips that included the Orange Buffalo Lodge, North Central Family Centre (NCFC) and informal bonding moments.
- The setting at FNUUniv and the warm, welcoming atmosphere.

## Areas for Improvement

- Overcrowded sessions and limited breakout opportunities.
- Logistical issues such as travel changes and lack of shuttle services.
- Concerns about language barriers for the next forum in Quebec.

## Looking Ahead to 2026

While many expressed enthusiasm about attending the 2026 NBRF, attendance will depend on factors such as:

- Location (concerns about Quebec and language accessibility),
- Cost and travel logistics,
- Relevance and freshness of content.

## Expanded Speaker Feedback

### 1. Eugene Arcand – Keynote Speaker

- Widely regarded as one of the most impactful speakers.
- Participants described his keynote as:
  - “Powerful,” “transformative,” and “engaging.”
  - A “clear message from the heart” that resonated deeply.
  - A brave and honest account of residential school experiences that emphasized the importance of remembering and advocating for Indigenous sovereignty and rights.
- His storytelling was seen as a catalyst for emotional reflection and renewed commitment to reconciliation.

### 2. Truth and Reconciliation Commissioners – Chief Wilton Littlechild & Dr. Marie Wilson

- Their “Ten-Year TRC Reflection” was a standout session.
- Feedback highlighted:
  - Their vulnerability and humanity.
  - Their ability to motivate continued work toward truth and reconciliation.
  - A reminder that reconciliation remains urgent and must not become a “buzzword.”
- Their presence was seen as a privilege and a powerful reminder of the TRC’s legacy.

### 3. Residential School Elders and Knowledge-Keepers

- Deep appreciation for their authenticity and lived experiences.
- Participants valued:
  - The non-institutional, heartfelt sharing.
  - The emotional weight and truth of their stories.
  - Their role in grounding the forum in real, lived Indigenous experiences.

### 4. Panel Discussions and Creative Expression

- A panel featuring Dr. Jeff Keshen, University of Regina President and Vice-Chancellor; Dr. Jacqueline Ottmann, First Nations University of Canada President; Dr. Chris Yost, U of R Vice-President (Research); Dr. Edward Doolittle, First Nations University of Canada Associate Dean (Research and Graduate Studies) noted as a favorite.
- Participants appreciated the diversity of voices and perspectives.

### 5. Academic Speakers

- Dr. Blair Stonechild: Commended for his interactive storytelling and teachings, which were seen as highly educational and engaging.
- Dr. Kathy Walker: Led a session on Treaties and Agreements that encouraged critical thinking about how post-secondary institutions can honor treaty relationships.
- Dr. Verna St. Denis: Her work was cited as influential in academic settings, especially for Indigenous educators.

### 6. General Reflections on Speakers

- Many attendees noted that “every speaker offered a learning opportunity.”
- The keynote speakers, especially the TRC Commissioners and Eugene Arcand, were described as “integral” to the forum’s impact.
- There was a strong appreciation for the balance of personal storytelling, academic insight, and cultural grounding.



# SPEAKER Bios



**Trina Joseph**

Trina Joseph is Cree from the Big River First Nation. She is the Executive Director for the First Nations University of Canada, Northern Campus. As a proud Alumna of FNU, Trina has dedicated her efforts to supporting Indigenous education and student success in any way she is able. She is an active volunteer within her community and also lends her time to a variety of committees and events within FNU and U of R. Above all else, Trina is Mom to three sons who give her the motivation and guidance to continue to be an advocate for students and a voice for Indigenous Education.



**Chef Kirk Ermine**

Chef Kirk Ermine was born and raised in Sturgeon Lake First Nation located 45 km northwest of Prince Albert. In 2001, at the age of 20, he was diagnosed with Juvenile Type 1 Diabetes. This life-altering event shaped the course of his future, as he became more interested in foods and cooking.

Kirk left the reserve to complete his Culinary Arts – Professional Cooking Diploma through the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and graduated in 2006. In 2010, he received his Journeyman Certificate of Qualification which gave him Red Seal Chef status. Kirk is currently investigating ways to integrate his passion for cooking and interest in traditional First Nations foods with Diabetes Education.



**Dr. Blair Stonechild**

Blair Stonechild is a member of the Muscowpetung Saulteaux First Nation and is a survivor of the Qu'Appelle Indian Residential School. He obtained his Bachelor's degree from McGill, and Master's and Doctorate degrees from University of Regina. In 1976 Blair joined the First Nations University of Canada as its first faculty member and has been Dean of Academics and Executive Director of Development.

Major publications include *Loyal Till Death: Indians and the North-West Rebellion*, (1997); *The New Buffalo: Aboriginal Post-secondary Policy in Canada* (2006); *Buffy Sainte-Marie: It's My Way* (2012), *The Knowledge Seeker: Embracing Indigenous Spirituality* (2016), *Loss of Indigenous Eden and the Fall of Spirituality* (2020), and *Challenge to Civilization: Indigenous Wisdom and the Future* (2024). Blair is married to Sylvia and has three adult children.



**Dr. Marie Wilson**

Dr. Marie Wilson (CM, ONWT, MSC) served six years as a commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, traveling nationwide to advance reconciliation. An accomplished speaker, she has shared her insights across North America, Europe, Australia, and New Zealand.

Born in Ontario, Dr. Wilson's diverse career includes roles as a journalist, teacher, professor, trainer, and executive, with work experiences spanning Canada, France, Burkina Faso, South Africa, and South America. Currently based in Yellowknife,

Northwest Territories, she continues to inspire with her commitment to education, justice, and the transformative power of reconciliation.



**Elder Margaret Keewatin**

FSIN Senator Margaret Keewatin is a member of Okanese First Nation in Treaty Four Territory. Margaret works as a Cultural Advisor at All Nations Healing Hospital – White Raven Healing Center.



**Elder William Ratfoot**

William is a member of the Makwa Sahgaiehcan First Nation in Treaty Six territory. William is currently the Elder Advisor to FNU Board of Governors and a member of the FNU kîhê-ayak Council.



**Elder Shelley Belhumeur**

Shelley spent two decades in St. Louis on the land where FNU's Traditional Campus is now located before retiring with her partner of 33 years in the town of Wakaw, Saskatchewan. Shelley, a proud Two-Spirit Elder and member of Métis Nation–Saskatchewan is very involved in her Métis culture. As a Knowledge Keeper/Elder, and Pipe Carrier, she holds ceremonies and teaches cultural awareness throughout the province.

She also serves as an Elder at the First Nations University of Canada's Northern Campus in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan.



**Nelson Bird**

Nelson Bird is a former CTV journalist and current lecturer at First Nations University of Canada in the Indigenous Communication Arts Program (INCA).

Originally from the Peepeekisis Cree Nation in Saskatchewan, Bird built a distinguished career in broadcast journalism, spending 26 years with CTV News in Regina. He was a reporter, camera person, anchor, as well as host and producer of the weekly series "Indigenous Circle". Prior to leaving CTV in June 2024, Nelson was the Assignment Editor at CTV Regina News overseeing daily mainstream newsroom operations as well as ensuring coverage of Indigenous issues, politics, and culture.

Nelson has always used his platform to amplify Indigenous voices and bring attention to the challenges and achievements of First Nations communities. His work earned him numerous awards and recognition, solidifying his reputation as a respected journalist and storyteller. In July 2023 Nelson was awarded a lifetime Achievement Award from the Radio Television Digital News Association (RTDNA) of Canada.

Since transitioning to academia, Bird has continued his commitment to Indigenous storytelling and representation in the media. As a lecturer at FNU, he mentors the next generation of Indigenous journalists, sharing his expertise in journalism, media ethics, and storytelling.

Beyond his professional roles, Bird remains deeply connected to his community, advocating for Indigenous rights and cultural preservation. His dedication to truth, education, and storytelling continues to inspire students and journalists alike.



**Dennis Omeasoo**

Dennis Omeasoo is Plains Cree from Maskwacis, Alberta. He now resides on Piapot First Nation.

Dennis is a husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather. He is currently a resident Elder / Knowledge Keeper at First Nations University of Canada.

Dennis is a life speaker and has extensive knowledge of First Nations history and works jointly with other professionals on the integration of First Nations content and worldviews into classroom environments. It is his desire to actively apply and expand his background into furthering and appreciation and promotion of First Nations people and cultural identity.

He has contributed to community diversity and youth. He bases his knowledge from past and present philosophies, experiential learning and ability to communicate both Cree and English.



**Everet "Chase" Sayer**

Everet "Chase" Sayer and his two daughters, Dinaye and Cree Sayer, are members of the Piapot First Nation in Treaty 4 territory of Saskatchewan, Canada. Raised singing in ceremonies, Chase has also enjoyed going across the US and Canada to sing at powwows and round dances. Dinaye and Cree have been singing alongside their father at ceremonies, round dances, and powwows. They are following their dad's footsteps since they were babies. Together, the three have performed for many different occasions and are always appreciative for the opportunities that their singing abilities have provided them.



**Chief Fabian Head**

FSIN Third Vice Chief Fabian Head is a member of the Red Earth Cree Nation in Treaty Five territory in eastern Saskatchewan. Throughout his life, he has maintained a connection to his culture, language, and identity, which is the cornerstone of his personal and professional journey.

Vice Chief Head has an extensive background in leadership and education. He has served as Chief, Councillor, and educator and has demonstrated a commitment to the advancement and well-being of his people. His advocacy for the Treaty Right to Education emphasizes his deep understanding of its critical importance for the future of First Nation youth and communities.

Vice Chief Head holds a Bachelor of Arts with a major in Indigenous Studies from the University of Regina and a Bachelor of Education from the University of Saskatchewan. These academic achievements have equipped him with a solid foundation to support his leadership and advocacy efforts.

Beyond his professional responsibilities, Vice Chief Head actively participates in and promotes initiatives that strengthen cultural identity and heritage, recognizing their vital role in the resilience and empowerment of First Nations communities.

Recently elected as the Third Vice Chief of the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN), representing 74 First Nations and over 160,000 First Nations people, he passionately advocates for Treaty and Inherent Rights, ensuring these rights are upheld and respected for future generations. His dedication is driven by a vision of a thriving and self-sustaining future for all First Nations people.



**Gabriel Miller**

Gabriel Miller is the President and CEO of Universities Canada. He is an experienced not-for-profit leader who has built an extensive track record in member relations, advocacy, stakeholder engagement, and public policy development over his 22-year career. Previously, he was the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences.

Prior to joining the Federation, he served in a series of senior roles with the Canadian Cancer Society, culminating as Vice-President of Public Issues, Policy and Cancer Information, and at the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. Gabriel has extensive experience building public dialogue on complex issues such as end-of-life and palliative care, directed successful national campaigns, and been a leader in highly effective coalitions, including one that led to the federal ban on asbestos announced in 2016 and the 10-year national infrastructure plan announced in 2013. He is an experienced media spokesperson who has appeared in major national television news broadcast organizations and leading Canadian newspapers. Previously, Gabriel was the Government and Media Relations Director of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, which represents big city mayors and municipal governments across the country.

Gabriel holds a BA in Philosophy from Queen's University and has served as a member of several not-for-profit boards as well as on the Government of Canada's Diamond Jubilee Advisory Committee.



**Dr. Lynn Wells**

Dr. Lynn Wells is a Canadian scholar, teacher and university leader, with nearly 20 years of experience in senior academic leadership positions. In April 2024, Dr. Wells became the 12th President and Vice-Chancellor of Laurentian University in Sudbury, Ontario, Canada.

Dr. Wells served as Provost and Vice-President Academic at Brock University from 2020 to 2023, where she also held a concurrent appointment as Interim President and Vice-Chancellor for fifteen months. Prior to 2020, she was the inaugural Associate Vice-President, Students and Teaching at MacEwan University in Edmonton and held senior positions at the University of Regina, including Acting Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Associate Vice-President Academic. For seven years, Dr. Wells worked directly with Indigenous people and communities through her service as Vice-President Academic and Special Advisor to the President at First Nations University of Canada.

As a leader, Dr. Wells has demonstrated her commitment to key issues such as national reconciliation, equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility. Dr. Wells is a respected scholar in her field of Contemporary British Fiction, having published two books and numerous articles. She holds a Master's in English and a B.A. Honours (summa cum laude) in English and French Studies from York University, along with a PhD in English from Western University.



**Dominic Beaudry**

Dominic Beaudry is currently the Associate Vice-President of Academic and Indigenous Programs at Laurentian University. His work with the Office of Academic and Indigenous Programs currently includes advocating, expanding and revitalizing Indigenous Courses and Programs while taking an interdisciplinary approach for delivery. He supports the equity, diversity and inclusion planning the school has been working to improve. His previous work includes Professor of Indigenous studies at Seneca College, Education Officer with the Student Achievement Division at the Ministry of Education, and Education Director with the Wikwemikong Board of Education.





**Eugene Arcand**

A Cree from the Muskeg Lake First Nation in Saskatchewan, Eugene Arcand spent nine years at the St. Michael Indian Residential School in Duck Lake and two years at the St. Paul's Lebret Students Residence, both in Saskatchewan.

First Nation Sports Hall of Fame inductee, Mr. Arcand has dedicated much of his time to organizing regional and national events, including First Nations sports events, cultural events, tourism events, and events geared to the advancement of First Nations youth.



**Peter Brass**

Peter Brass is the Art Collections Manager at the First Nations University of Canada and also works with university students tanning animal hides. Outside of his role at FNU, Peter is a writer and director that works mainly with short film and documentary.



**Maria Campbell**

Maria Campbell is a celebrated, award-winning Métis author, playwright and filmmaker but first and foremost, she prefers to be known as a community worker.

A dedicated volunteer, activist and advocate for Indigenous rights and the rights of women and children for more than 40 years, Campbell opened doors for Métis writers when she authored her best-selling autobiography, *Halfbreed*, in 1973. She has since written eight books and 6 stage plays, including *Flight*, the first all-Indigenous theatre production in Canada. Maria was inducted into the Saskatchewan Theatre Hall of Fame in 2000.

Campbell's contributions to community and culture have earned her multiple major awards and accolades including the Vanier Award as One of Canada's Five Outstanding Young Canadians, a National Aboriginal Achievement Award, the Saskatchewan Order of Merit, a Distinguished Canadian Award, the Saskatchewan Lieutenant Governor's Lifetime Achievement Award in the Arts, and in 2022 she received the prestigious Kloppenberg Award. She was made an Officer of the Order of Canada in 2008 and in 2012 she received the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation Fellowship.

Campbell has also received numerous Honorary Doctorates from Universities across Canada and in 2023, she was elected a Member of the Academy of Arts and Sciences in Cambridge, MA, one of the most prestigious and oldest Academies in the Americas.

She speaks three Indigenous languages— Cree, Michif and Saukteaux, —and has had her books translated into German, Chinese, French, Italian, Spanish and Catalan.

Maria is a mother, grandmother, and great grandmother.



**Tara Thompson**

Tara Thompson is a Nakota/Saulteaux from Cega'Kin (Carry the Kettle First Nation) in Saskatchewan. Tara began her journey with FNU as a student in 2006 upon graduating with her Undergraduate Degree in 2010. Tara set out her career as a Human Resources professional in a number of different industries gaining valuable experience in diverse sectors to expand her skills and work perspectives. In 2019 Tara was welcomed back to the First Nations University to lead the Human Resources Department. and has held several positions within the University, with the most recent as Chief Administrative Officer. With the supports of being grounded in the First Nations culture, Tara is driven to create work environments that foster a deeper sense of belonging for Indigenous peoples.

Tara's role as Chief Administrative Officer is overseeing and managing several service and support departments within FNU, including HR, PPM, IT, the Daycare and Cafe, and the Art Collection.



**Dr. Kathy Walker**

Dr. Kathy Walker (wiya\*/she) is nêhiyaw iskwêw with Métis, Saukteaux and Nakota lineages and grew up on the Okanese First Nation in Treaty Four territory. She is a proud mother, auntie and kokum (great aunt) who has spent most of her professional life working in government, academia and for non-profits. A lifelong learner, she holds multiple degrees, including master's degrees in business administration and political science, as well as a PhD in Political Science. Most recently, Dr. Walker worked in academia as an Assistant Professor in Political Studies at the University of Saskatchewan.

She is an OCAP certified researcher with the First Nations Information Governance Centre and her research and work is informed by her lived experience and commitment to advancing public education, policy and community development grounded in truth, reconciliation and the resurgence of Plains Indigenous governance, including Treaty understanding as recorded by First Nation oral traditions, histories and kisêyiniwak or 'Elders.'

Dr. Walker also is currently working to learn nêhiyawêwin (the Plains Cree language).



**Chief Wilton Littlechild**

Anyone aware of the work, life, and growing legacy of J. Wilton Littlechild will know that he is a significant leader in international Indigenous law and the pursuit of reconciliation between Indigenous peoples and the country of Canada.

Known fondly as "Willie", Littlechild is an honorary Cree chief, lawyer within the Ermineskin reserve, and fervent advocate for sports and education. Alongside holding many significant leadership positions, Willie contributed to writing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous

Peoples (UNDRIP), was a Member of Parliament for Wetaskiwin, and continues to be a critical leader in Canada's journey towards Truth & Reconciliation.



**Max FineDay**

Max FineDay is the CEO of Warshield, a consulting firm specializing in government relations and policy development. He assists Chiefs, CEOs, and governments in solving complex problems and getting things done.

As CEO of Warshield, Max has provided insights on Indigenous politics to media outlets, including The Canadian Press, National Post, and Toronto Star.

In 2018, he was appointed to the inaugural National Council on Reconciliation alongside former Commissioner Littlechild. In this role, he contributed to crafting the scope, mandate, and legislation for the Council. Max regards this experience of learning directly from the TRC Commissioners, and other Indigenous leaders, as one of the foundational moments of his life.

Max currently resides in his community of Sweetgrass First Nation, where he is a favourite uncle to many nieces and nephews.



**Sherry Saevil**

Sherry is a member of Mistawasis nêhiyawak and an alumni from University of Saskatchewan. She has dedicated her career to challenging systemic barriers and seeking justice for Indigenous communities in Canada.

Sherry has worked with First Nations communities and organizations over the last 30 years in a variety of roles from a historical researcher, historical writer, policy analyst, Law coordinator and Assistant Director of Lands and Resources for Six Nations of the Grand River Territory.



Currently Sherry is the Indigenous Education Advisor with the Halton Catholic District School Board. She is a passionate advocate for First Nations, Metis and Inuit Education and believes that Reconciliation is possible through Education. Sherry was on the Audit, Finance & Risk Committee for the Board of Governors.



**Cadmus Delorme**

Cadmus Delorme, CA'11, CCE'11, DADMN'12, CHTGEM'12, BAdmin'13, MPA'16, a Cree and Saulteaux (pronounced: sow-toe), is a citizen of the Cowessess (pronounced: Cow-is-ess) First Nation. Mr. Delorme was an elected Chief from 2016 to 2023. Mr. Delorme is a proud alumnus of the First Nations University of Canada and the University of Regina, where he currently serves at the Chair of the Board of Governors.

In addition to his educational achievements, he has also been the recipient of numerous awards and sat on various committees, such as: Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal (2012); the Queen Elizabeth Platinum Jubilee Medal (2022); and was named one of CBC Saskatchewan's Future 40, which celebrates the province's new generation of leaders, builders, and change-makers under the age of 40.

While Chief, Mr. Delorme's focus was on three pillars: cultural rejuvenation, political sovereignty, and economic self-sustainability. During the seven years in office, Cowessess First Nation advanced in governance stability, child welfare reform, renewable energy projects, agriculture, property management, and more.

In April 2023, Mr. Delorme chose to not run for a third term and soon after became a founder and Partner to OneHoop Advisory Services and founder and Partner to Flowing River Capital Group, which focuses on enhancing the private equity market through Truth and Reconciliation Call to Action #92: Business and Reconciliation, and #57: Professional Development.

Mr. Delorme and his wife Kimberly raise his brother-in-law, daughter and two sons in Regina and on the Cowessess First Nation.



**William Prince**

Guided by a practical yet profound gratitude, William Prince's songs convey the power of wonder and humility. A masterclass in skilful simplicity, Prince's songwriting is grounded in a balance between the personal and the universal, his own moments of self-discovery and the larger questions we face together.

Over four albums, William Prince has created a body of work that traces a remarkable journey. On his most recent, *Stand in the Joy*, produced by Dave Cobb, William Prince finds himself exactly where he needs to be. *Stand in the Joy*, released in 2023, won the JUNO Award for Contemporary Roots Album of the Year. Prince was also nominated for Americana Honors & Awards Emerging Act of the Year, Folk Alliance International Album of the Year, and JUNO Award Songwriter of the Year.

Prince's career trajectory is marked by numerous accolades and milestones including an opening slot for Neil Young, tours with *The War and Treaty*, *Yola* and *Katie Pruitt*, two *Tiny Desk* sessions, a debut at *The Grand Ole Opry* and a *Newport Folk Festival* debut as the recipient of the *John Prine Songwriter Fellowship*. From national network television appearances, top tier media coverage and performances at major international festivals, William Prince has become one of the country's most beloved and celebrated songwriters.



**Joely BigEagle- Kequahtoway**

Joely BigEagle-Kequahtoway is an interdisciplinary land-based buffalo artist. She is a fashion and textile designer, visual artist, beader, storyteller and co-founder of the Buffalo People Arts Institute. She is Nakota/Cree/Saulteaux from the White Bear First Nations - signatory to Treaty 4. She has degrees in Civil Engineering from the University of Calgary and Mathematics from

the First Nations University of Canada. She obtained her Master of Fine Arts degree in May 2024 from the Institute of American Indian Art in Santa Fe, New Mexico. She loves to incorporate mathematics and geometry in her artwork and is inspired by the perfect symmetry in nature. Her mantra envelopes everything *Tatanga* (Buffalo) as it connects her to ancestral memories, the land and is the manifestational glue that keeps her world together.



**Preston Littlelent**

Preston Littlelent is immersed in the lifestyle and travel of Powwow. He has been everywhere across Canada and the United States. Preston has participated in a lot of ceremonies over the last 30 plus years including sweat lodge, round dance, pipe ceremony, and feasts, not to mention, Powwow.

Although born and raised in Regina, he spent a lot of time in the countryside as a member by way of his father of Kawacatoose (Cree) First Nation and

Preston has relations from his mother's family with Muscowpetung (Saulteaux) First Nation. Both nations are located in Treaty 4 Territory.

Since the 1980s, Preston and his family have participated in Powwow and Spiritual Institutes. From his parents, he learned the value of staying a humble, pitiful person by way of following the Ancestors and the old ways of the land which are natural to him and are highlighted throughout the many seasons he explores through participating in Powwow. His knowledge was gathered by growing up in the Cree way of life talking, praying, and singing which helped him to respect and balance his own path.

Preston has built his reputation as a strong leader with his talent, energy and ability to connect to others through his desire to observe and understand. He has a clear belief Powwow is embodied by four components: praying, singing, dancing and having fun.

Preston understands Powwow is key in Indigenous communities as it brings everyone together to celebrate life and to heal. When he was 14 years old, he was

awarded a Powwow title of FSIN Warrior as Youth representative, and he is still recognized as a lifetime warrior. At Powwow events, when he is not dancing, Preston acts as emcee for the third generation of Eagle Claw Dance Troupe performers.

Preston speaks to Youth as a Knowledge Keeper for Regina Catholic School Division. He also serves on three different Elder Boards including RCSD, University of Regina and RT/SIS The Gathering Place.



**Dr. Verna St. Denis**

Dr. Verna St. Denis, Professor Emerita of Education at the University of Saskatchewan, former Special Advisor to the President at University of Saskatchewan on Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression, January 2021, to January 2025. Taught undergraduate and graduate courses in integrated anti-racist education in the Department of Educational Foundations, 1992-2022. Dr. St. Denis is both Metis and Cree, and member of Beardy's and Okemasis First Nation, Treaty #6. Completed a BEd. (with distinction) U of S in 1982, Master of Arts, University of Alaska-Fairbanks, 1989 and a Ph.D. in Education at Stanford University, 2002, Fulbright Scholar, 1994.

Engaged in research titled: "How school leaders narrate their personal and professional engagement with anti-racist education?" Recently completed a research report for the Institute of Indigenous Peoples Health Research (IIPHR) of the Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR), titled, *Researching Ourselves to Life: Improving Canadian Institutes for Health Research funding for Indigenous health research* (St. Denis & Hantke, 2025). Appointed by the Government of Canada to the Saskatchewan Federal Judicial Advisory Committee, Fall 2022-2024 and recently reappointed for a second term. Member, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee to the Deputy Minister, Innovation, Science and Economic Development, 2024-25.



**Dr. Jacqueline Ottmann**

Dr. Jacqueline Ottmann (mizowaykomiguk paypomwayotung; thunder that can be felt over a large landscape) is Anishinaabe (Saulteaux) from Fishing Lake First Nation in Treaty Four, Saskatchewan. In 2021, Dr. Ottmann accepted the role as President of First Nations University of Canada, Canada's only national Indigenous university. She is a purpose-driven leader that has dedicated her life's work in service to Indigenous education. Often described as a listener and strong leader Jackie's leadership is guided by Indigenous knowledges – ways of being, knowing, and doing.

Dr. Ottmann has contributed to all levels of education as an elementary and high school teacher, a school principal, and within post-secondary institutions. At the University of Calgary, Ottmann held various scholarly and leadership positions, including Director of Indigenous Initiatives, Program Director, and Co-Chair of the Indigenous Strategy. After 13 years at UCalgary, she became the inaugural Vice-Provost Indigenous Engagement at the University of Saskatchewan, developing the university's first Indigenous Strategy ohpahotân | oohpaahotaan let's fly up together.

Ottmann is the first Indigenous person to become President of the Canadian Study for the Society of Education, and the founder of Thrivance: Journal of Indigenous Ways of Being, Knowing, and Doing. Jacqueline's research interests include leadership, change management, organizational theories and practices, and strategic development. She has been recognized as an international researcher, advocate, and change-maker whose purpose is to transform practices inclusive of Indigenous methodologies and pedagogies.



**Dr. Jeff Keshen**

Dr. Jeff Keshen is the University of Regina's eighth President and Vice-Chancellor, having assumed the role on July 1, 2021.

He holds a doctoral degree from York University with a research concentration in the history of war and conflict. He is the author of five books, more than 25 scholarly articles, and has edited 11 books.

Prior to joining the University of Regina, he served as Vice-President of Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador's Grenfell Campus in Corner Brook, Dean of the Faculty of Arts at Mount Royal University, and Chair of the Department of History at the University of Ottawa.

Throughout his teaching, research, and administrative career, Dr. Keshen has emphasized the important role universities play in helping build and maintain dynamic and healthy communities at the local, regional, national, and international levels.

During his tenure at the University of Regina, the University has launched its first-ever Indigenous Engagement Strategic Plan, as well as its first Indigenous Procurement Strategy – two living documents that are helping transform the institution and its relationship with Indigenous communities.



**Dr. Edward Doolittle**

Dr. Edward Doolittle is Kanyen'kehake (Mohawk) from Six Nations in southern Ontario. He earned a PhD in pure mathematics (partial differential equations) from the University of Toronto in 1997. From then until 2001 he worked for Queen's University's Aboriginal Teacher Education Program, helping to administer

the program and teaching Indigenous mathematics education, and from 2000 to 2001 he studied the Mohawk language in immersion with Onkwewenna Kentsyohkwa (Our Language Group) on Six Nations. From 2001 he has been on the faculty of First Nations University and the University of Regina, currently as Associate Professor of Mathematics and Associate Dean, Research and Graduate Programs. He is a Fellow of the Canadian Mathematical Society (CMS), a recipient of the Adrien Pouliot Award from the CMS in recognition of significant contributions to mathematics education in Canada, and recipient of a Governor General's Gold Medal.



**Dr. Chris Yost**

Dr. Chris Yost is Vice-President (Research) and a full professor within the Biology Department at the University of Regina. From 2007 to 2017 he was a Canada Research Chair in Environmental Microbiology. He is the co-Director of the Institute for Microbial Systems and Society, where he supervises a diverse team of undergraduate, and graduate student researchers. In addition to maintaining an active research lab that uses genomic technologies to study agriculturally relevant interactions between microbes and plants, he has had a long-term commitment to serving the University in supporting its research enterprise.

Dr. Yost was the chair of the Council Committee on Academic Mission and the chair of the Council Committee on Research. He also has national experience in research policy work, and was a member of NSERC's Committee on Discovery Research while serving as a Group Chair for NSERC's Discovery Grant program. He served the Canadian Society of Microbiologists in leadership positions for many years. Prior to coming to the University of Regina in 2003, Dr. Yost was a research scientist with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada at the Lacombe Research Centre and later worked internationally as a research associate at the University of Aarhus in Denmark.



**Lori Campbell**

Lori holds a Master's of Adult Education and two Bachelor's degrees in Indigenous-related fields, and she is pursuing a PhD in Social Justice Education at OISE, University of Toronto, focusing on Indigenous Women's Leadership in Higher Education Administration. Her lived experiences and deep understanding of Indigenous cultures enrich her public speaking, guest lecturing, and research.

As an influential thought leader, Lori has published book chapters and presented at international conferences on Indigenous education. Her dedication to equity has earned her awards such as the 2021 Women of Inspiration Indigenous Leader Award, the 2023 Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal for Community Engagement, and the 2023 National Inspire Award for Leadership in Education. Passionate about storytelling, she champions Indigenization, decolonization, and reconciliation to foster a just, inclusive society.



**Dr. David Gregory**

Dr. David Gregory has been serving as Interim Provost and Vice-President (Academic) at the University of Regina since June 2024. He previously served in the role from 2020 to 2023 and provided excellent, collegial and sage leadership through the COVID-19 pandemic and its challenging medical, social and economic impacts.

Dr. Gregory commenced employment at the University of Regina in 2011 as the Founding Dean, Faculty of Nursing. In addition to establishing the Faculty, he was responsible for enacting two collaborative nursing programs with Saskatchewan Polytechnic;





The Saskatchewan Collaborative Bachelor of Science in Nursing program, and the Collaborative Nurse Practitioner Program (online master's degree).

A graduate of the University of Ottawa (BScN) and the University of Manitoba (MN), he holds a PhD in nursing from the University of Arizona. He was accorded the title Dean Emeritus from the University of Manitoba where he served as Dean, Faculty of Nursing from 1999 to 2004. As a visiting professor, Dr. Gregory taught Qualitative Research Methods at the University of Hong Kong.

Dr. Gregory's PhD dissertation served as the basis for *Cancer Stories: On Life and Suffering* (McGill-Queens Press). He was also the lead editor on a national nursing textbook, *Fundamentals: Perspectives on the Art and Science of Canadian Nursing* (2nd Edition, 2020). Dr. Gregory is a Fellow of the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences, the only registered nurse in the province to hold this honour. Dr. Gregory's scholarly interests include qualitative research methodologies, Indigenous health and education, and topics related to medical anthropology.



**Colleen Charles**

Colleen J. Charles is a Woodland Cree from the Lac La Ronge Indian Band, raised in La Ronge, Saskatchewan. She is a mother, grandmother, educator and an Indigenous artist. As an Indigenous scholar, Colleen has taught Indigenous Studies courses for university students over the past seven years.

Currently, she is an Indigenous Studies Instructor for the First Nations University of Canada at the Northern Campus in Prince Albert, SK. Colleen incorporates an interactive art workshop called *Reconciliation on Canvas* that encompasses the brief historical and contemporary contexts of Canadian Indigenous peoples. This is a form of healing through art.



**Zoey Roy**

Zoey Roy (Nêhithaw-Denesuline Métis) is a renowned spoken word poet, educator, and community-based artist from Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. She has performed globally, including at the 2021 World Expo in Dubai, and collaborated with symphonies across Canada. Living with c-PTSD and ADHD, Zoey credits poetry with helping her navigate life's rhythms and inspire change.

Through Sound Scholars, she engages youth in songwriting, and her *Medicine Songs* project highlights Indigenous grandmothers' voices through rap and music videos. A passionate advocate for Indigenous representation in TV and film, Zoey holds multiple degrees and is completing a PhD in Education. She lives in Ottawa with her family.



**Delaney Cox**

Delaney is a graphic recorder and illustrator based out of Vancouver, BC. Commonly equipped with tea, a podcast and questionable posture, Delaney has been drawing for as long as she can remember. Having been a part of the ThinkLink Graphics team since 2022, she has loved learning the art of translating knowledge, story and experience into visual language. From this work, Delaney has had the opportunity to work extensively with Indigenous communities, environmental organizations, creative companies and multiple facets of the Canadian health care and education sectors - to name a few. When she's not creating, Delaney is out walking her favourite trails (typically one full of dogs), watching the latest docuseries, and plotting her next travel adventure!



# JUST STICK FEATHERS ON IT

## JOHN BRADY MCDONALD

John Brady McDonald (Nêhiyawak-Métis) is a survivor of Prince Albert Indian Student Residence, having grown up there from 1984- 1989. “My generation is often the one that’s kind of forgotten ... they’re always showing black and white photographs from the ‘50s and ‘60s.” McDonald’s children and his sister’s children are the first of four generations of their family not to have known inside of a residential school and the trauma of the residential school system.

The title *Just Stick Feathers On It* came out of a conversation at a Truth and Reconciliation event during which **McDonald pointed out to another attendee that they were veering off track and no longer focusing on reconciliation, nor anything whatsoever to do with Indigenous people. The response he received was, “Oh, just stick some feathers on it.”**

*Just Stick Feathers On It* has been generously shared by First Nations University of Canada for the 2025 National Building Reconciliation Forum.

John Brady McDonald, MBFSA, is a Nêhiyawak-Metis writer, artist, historian, musician, playwright, actor and activist born and raised in Prince Albert, SK. He is from the Muskeg Lake Cree Nation and the Mistawasis Nêhiyawak. The great-great-great grandson of Chief Mistawasis of the Plains Cree, as well as the grandson of famed Métis leader Jim Brady, John’s writings and artwork have been displayed in various publications, private and permanent collections, and galleries around the world, including the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa. John is one of the founding members of the P.A. Lowbrow art movement and served as vice-president of the Indigenous Peoples Artists Collective for nearly a decade.

John also served a term as vice-chair of the Board of Directors for Spark Theatre, and as a Senator with the Indigenous Council Committee of CUPE Saskatchewan.

John is the author of several books and has had his written works published and presented around the globe. John has studied at England’s prestigious University of Cambridge, where in July 2000 he made international headlines by symbolically ‘discovering’ and ‘claiming’ England for the First Peoples of the Americas. John is also an acclaimed public speaker, who has presented in venues across the globe, such as the Anskohk Aboriginal Literature Festival, the Black Hills Seminars on Reclaiming Youth, The Appalachian Mountain Seminars, the Edmonton and Fort McMurray Literary Festival, the Eden Mills

Writers Festival and at the Ottawa International Writers Festival. John was also included in the Aboriginal Artists and Performers Inventory for the 2010 Olympic Winter Games in Vancouver, BC.

John’s artwork and writing have been nominated for several awards, and he is the winner of the 2024 Saskatchewan Book Awards Non-fiction Award and Indigenous People’s Writing Award. He has been honoured with several grants from the Saskatchewan Arts Board. A noted polymath, John lives in Northern Saskatchewan.



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