





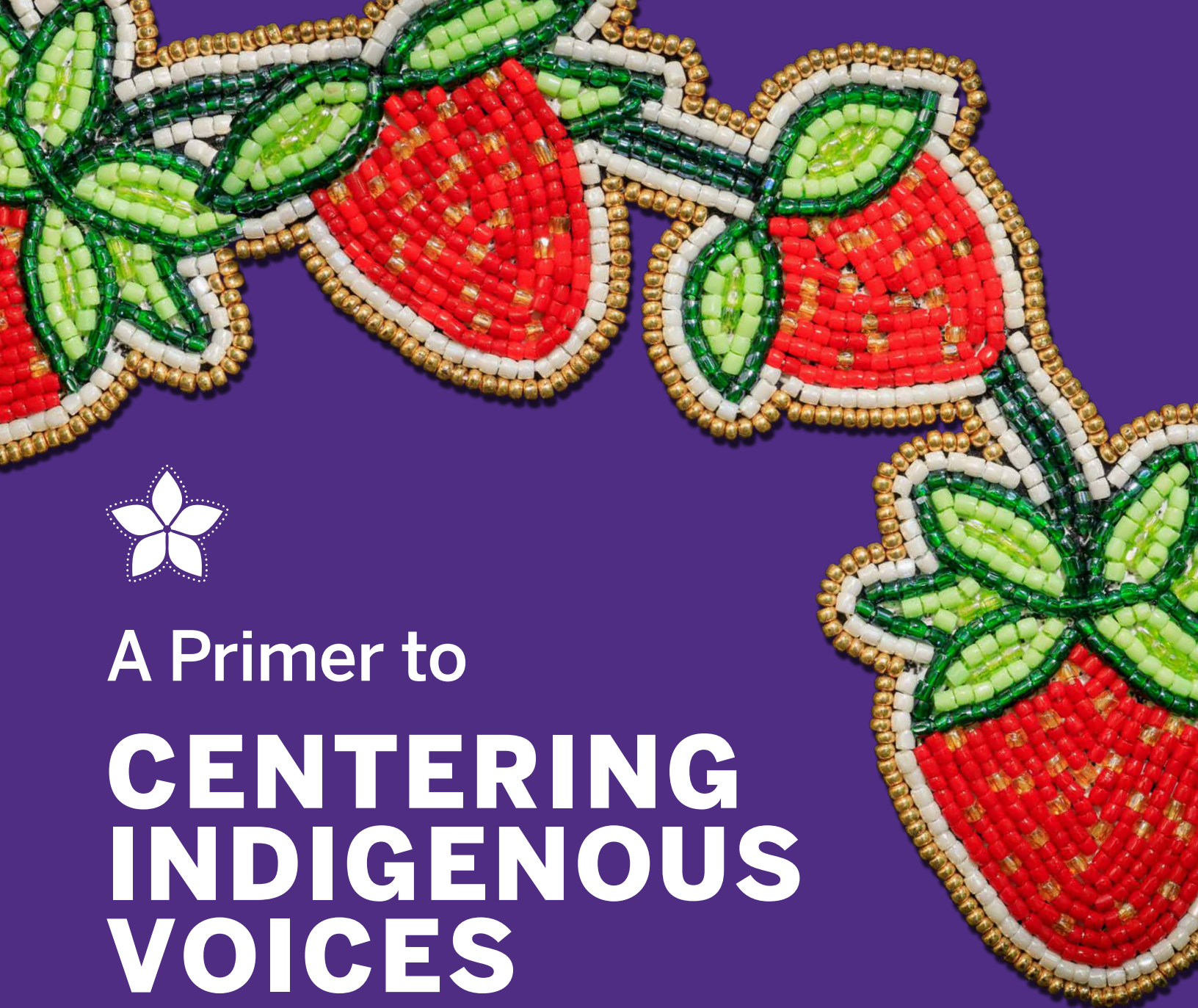
**ACADEMIC COUNCIL AGENDA**  
**Wednesday, October 20, 2:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.**  
**Labatt Hall, Room 103 / Zoom**

MISSION: An engaged liberal arts university community in which our Catholic character, Catholic intellectual tradition, and commitment to reconciliation and equity inform unique learning experiences that promote critical thought, creativity, and articulate expression.

- 1.0 Land Acknowledgment
- 2.0 Opening Prayer
- 3.0 Invited Guest: Christy Bressette, Vice-Provost & Associate Vice-President Indigenous Initiatives, Western University
  -  [A Guide Towards Indigenous Allyship at Western University](#)
  -  [Guide Towards Allyship in Indigenous Research \(primer\)](#)
- 4.0 Committee Reports
  - 4.1 Scholarship and Bursary Committee Decision
  - 4.2 Governance and Nominations Committee Decision
  - 4.3 Educational Policy Committee Decision
- 5.0 Reports
  - 5.1 President (Interim) Information
  - 5.2 King's University Council Students' Council Report Verbal Report
- 6.0 The Unanimous Consent Agenda
  - 6.1 Strategic Enrolment Management Information
  - 6.2 Vice-President and Academic Dean (Interim) Information
  - 6.3 Minutes of the Meeting of September 24, 2025 Decision
- 7.0 Items Removed from the Consent Agenda Discussion
- 8.0 New Business
- 9.0 Adjournment

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Paul Wilton



A Primer to

# CENTERING INDIGENOUS VOICES

Guide Towards Allyship  
in Indigenous Research

Western Research

JULY 2025



# PURPOSE

As calls for decolonization and reconciliation in research continue to grow, there is an urgent need to equip researchers, staff, students, and trainees with guidance on how to engage in ways that respect Indigenous sovereignty, support community-led knowledge creation, and follow culturally appropriate protocols. A common question from those new to Indigenous research is, “Where do I begin?”. This Guide offers practical and principled direction for engaging in respectful and ethical Indigenous research. Indigenous research extends beyond community-based approaches to encompass all research that may have potential implications for Indigenous Peoples, their data, Lands (water, air, plants, animals), and/or knowledges.

While there is no checklist that one can complete to become an ally in research, this Guide offers a starting point—fostering accountability, building trust, and helping ensure that research contributes meaningfully to Indigenous well-being and self-determination. It is also intended to strengthen institutional awareness and capacity to “advance reconciliation with Indigenous Communities,” as mandated in *Towards Western at 150* and emphasized in Western Research’s strategic plan, *Mobilize for Impact!* and the collective responsibility to uphold treaties and Indigenous data sovereignty.

## PARTNERS

Developed in partnership with The Office of Indigenous Initiatives and through the collaborative efforts of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous contributors, including faculty, staff, undergraduate and graduate students and trainees, and community members, this Guide is intended to support researchers at all levels in conducting research *in allyship* with Indigenous Peoples, communities, and organizations.

## Using This Guide

This Guide is an entry point for those engaging in Indigenous research. It complements the *Guide Towards Indigenous Allyship at Western University* and is structured around:

WHAT TO DO

WHY IT MATTERS

HOW TO DO IT

WHAT TO AVOID

WHERE TO FIND SUPPORT

## Recommendations

The Guide outlines four key recommendations: 1) learn and unlearn by educating ourselves; 2) unsettle ourselves through continual self-reflection; 3) listen to and support community-led research (& respect the right to refuse); and, 4) advocate to drive structural change in support of Indigenous Research.

### 1 Learn and Unlearn

**Do:** Educate yourself. Do your own research before reaching out to Indigenous colleagues including scholars and staff.

**Why:** Respect Indigenous colleagues’ time and expertise. Engage only when your questions align with their identity and research/expertise.

**Avoid:** Tokenizing or over-consulting Indigenous colleagues, especially without doing preliminary work.

### 2 Unsettle Yourself

**Do:** Reflect on your positionality, privilege, and responsibilities. Embrace discomfort and learn from mistakes.

**Why:** Ethical research requires accountability to both community and the natural world.

**Avoid:** Ignoring your treaty responsibilities or avoiding action out of fear of making mistakes.

### 3 Support Community-Led Research

**Do:** Respond to community priorities. Respect data sovereignty and the right to refuse participation.

**Why:** Research should benefit the community and be guided by their terms.

**Avoid:** Conducting research “on” communities based on your own interests or expectations of engagement.

### 4 Advocate for Structural Change

**Do:** Work to remove institutional barriers and support Indigenous-led research.

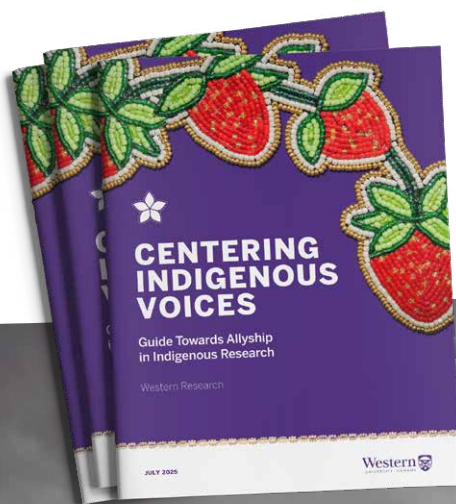
**Why:** Allyship includes transforming systems that hinder Indigenous research.

**Avoid:** Being passive in the face of systemic inequities.



A summary of recommendations by key findings can be found below. For details on 'how to' including additional resources and supports, please visit the Guide.

ALLYSHIP ACTION	INSTEAD OF...
Educate yourself and engage respectfully	Relying on Indigenous colleagues without doing your own work
Reflect on your role and responsibilities	Ignoring your positionality or avoiding discomfort
Follow community leadership and respect refusal	Imposing your research agenda or expecting participation
Push for institutional change	Accepting the status quo



### ACCESSING THE FULL GUIDE

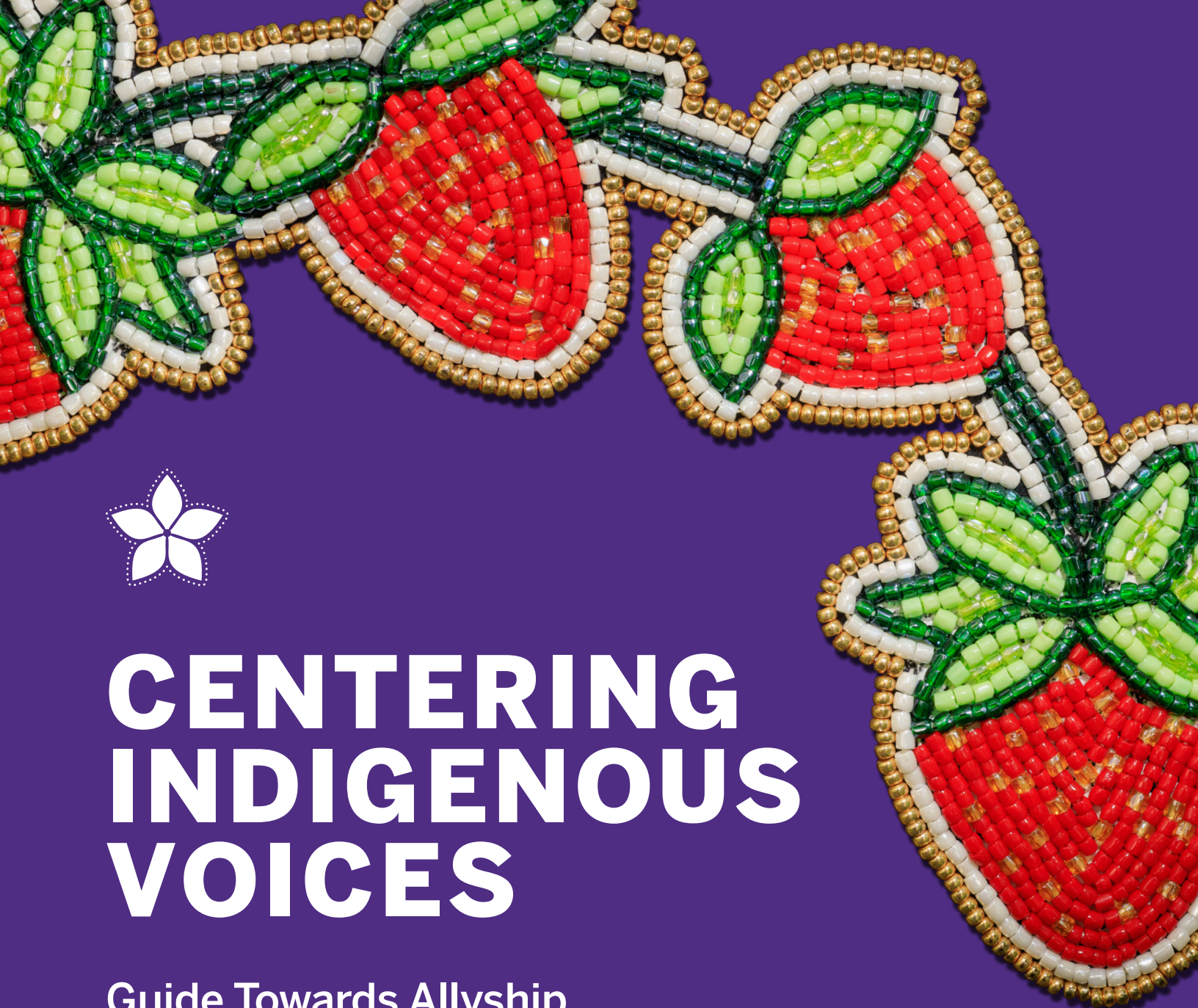
To access the full guide and explore additional resources, visit [Western Research's Indigenous Research Support website](#).

There, you'll find tools, guidance, and contacts to help you engage in respectful, community-centered research every step of the way.

#### WESTERN RESEARCH CONTACTS

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# CENTERING INDIGENOUS VOICES

Guide Towards Allyship  
in Indigenous Research

Western Research

JULY 2025



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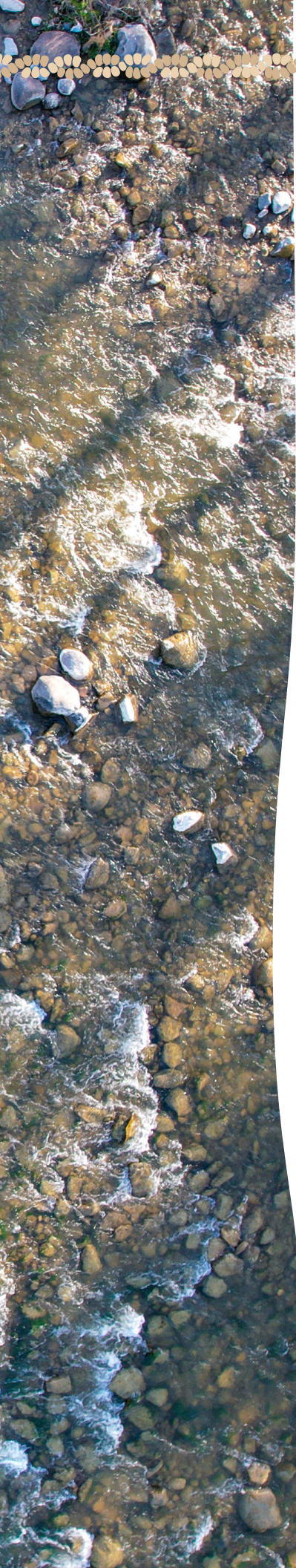
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# TERRITORY ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This Guide has been created at and for Western University which is located on the traditional lands and ancestral territories of the Anishinaabek (Ah-nish-in-a-bek), Haudenosaunee (Ho-den-no-show-nee), and Lūnaapéewak (Len-ahpay- wuk) Nations, who have longstanding relationships to this land, water, plant and animal life as the original caretakers. Western and the City of London are located on lands connected with the London Township and Sombra Treaties of 1796 and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum. The local First Nation communities of this area include Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, and Munsee Delaware Nation. In the region, there are eleven First Nation communities and a growing Indigenous urban population.

We recognize that research carried out by [settlers](#), involving and on Indigenous Peoples of [Turtle Island](#), has inflicted intra and intergenerational trauma through physical injury, psychological distress, cultural harm, and a denial of Indigenous ways of knowing as contributing to research. This has led to a distrust of research as an activity and a fear/distrust of organizations performing it. This Guide is one way in which the Western research community can work towards accepting and actioning “responsibility as a public institution to contribute toward revealing and correcting miseducation as well as renewing respectful relationships with Indigenous communities through our teaching, research and community service” (Office of Indigenous Initiatives, n.d.).

Western acknowledges in our strategic plan, [Towards Western at 150 \(2020\)](#), that Reconciliation is a priority and is integral to the university’s mission. Western Research’s strategic plan, [Mobilize for Impact! \(2022\)](#), commits to “ensure ethical research engagement with Indigenous communities, recognize colonial practices in, and adopt anti-colonial approach to, research” (page 6). By acknowledging that we are located on Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, and Lunaape lands connected to Indigenous-Crown Treaties made with the Deshkan Ziibing Anishinaabek (Chippewas of the Thames First Nation), and Indigenous Treaties such as the Dish with One Spoon, Western makes explicit our responsibilities to equity and justice for all Indigenous Peoples, Reconciliation, and our ongoing commitment to strengthen and build meaningful relationships including for research ([Guide Towards Indigenous Allyship at Western University, 2025](#)).



“

As researchers, scholars and artists, we have a responsibility to ensure our work respects, uplifts and meaningfully engages Indigenous Peoples in ways that are equitable, reciprocal and grounded in trust.

**Allyship** is not a label. It is a lifelong commitment to learning, **unlearning** and standing in solidarity. It is a powerful force for change that can help dismantle systemic barriers and renew relationships to drive research that is *rigorous and just*.

As researchers, scholars and artists, we have a responsibility to ensure our work respects, uplifts and meaningfully engages Indigenous Peoples in ways that are equitable, reciprocal and grounded in trust. These principles are core to our mission in Western Research.

This guide provides a practical framework for allyship with Indigenous communities within the research context. It has been co-created with the Office of Indigenous Initiatives in the spirit of reconciliation, ethical research practice and meaningful relationship-building.

By providing actionable steps, reflective questions and community-informed principles that can be integrated into our work, the guide supports our commitments to become better allies. I invite you to engage with it as a living resource – one that grows with your experience and deepens your relationships.

I encourage you to reach out to our team – with questions, for support and to share successes.

**Penny Pexman, PhD**  
Vice-President (Research)  
Western University



“

Research informed by Indigenous knowledge grounds understanding morally and ethically to safeguard the world for the benefit of all future generations.

Indigenous ways of knowing and being is comprised of distinct knowledge systems that provide tremendous value and innovation to research through long-term, time-tested, place-based, holistic understanding and perspectives that enrich and reorient Western scientific approaches. Research informed by Indigenous knowledge grounds understanding morally and ethically to safeguard the world for the benefit of all future generations, while prioritizing Indigenous concepts such as sustainability and integrity. Indigenous researchers often lead this transformative work which involves significant heavy lifting with the academy. Further, they are often expected to lead and action the work of Truth and Reconciliation within the academy as well.

With a goal to provide guidance in relation to respectful engagement with Indigenous research and Indigenous researchers, the Offices of Indigenous Initiatives, together with allied colleagues in Western Research, is pleased to launch this new responsive resource which builds upon on the principles articulated within the [Guide to Indigenous Allyship at Western](#). This resource is informed by the insight of many Indigenous and allied practitioners, partners, and collaborators to provide practical guidance and share promising practices that will help safeguard the Earth within an equitable and balanced approach.

**Christy Bressette, PhD**

*Vice-Provost & Associate Vice-President, Indigenous Initiatives  
Western University*





# CHI MIIGWECH, YAW<sup>^</sup>KO, ANUSHIIK, MERCII, THANK YOU!



This Guide was created through the collaborative efforts of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous contributors, including faculty, staff, undergraduate and graduate students and trainees, and community members. Our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has contributed their time, perspectives, and commitment to help inform the creation of this Guide.

Development of this Guide was led in partnership by [Western Research](#) and [The Office of Indigenous Initiatives](#) at Western University. We would like to extend a special thank you, chi miigwech, to Dr. Christy R. Bressette, Vice-Provost & Associate Vice-President (Indigenous Initiatives) and the Office of Indigenous Initiatives team for leading the path towards allyship.

The recommendations offered herein have been made in good faith with a genuine interest in supporting Western University's stated desire and commitment to enhancing Indigenous research allyship at Western. The content herein is non-exhaustive and is intended as a starting point in an ongoing learning journey that should be extended to include independent learning, engagement, and action.

# ABOUT THE GUIDE

The content in this Guide is non-exhaustive and is intended to complement existing resources including *The Office of Indigenous Initiatives [Guide Towards Indigenous Allyship at Western University](#)*. The information in this Guide is relevant to those interested in and/or conducting Indigenous research, including faculty, staff, students, trainees, and external partners, and is a starting point in an ongoing learning journey that should be extended to include independent learning, engagement, and action. This Guide is organized as follows:

**01 Part One: Introduction** provides the purpose (how to use the Guide and how to prepare when undertaking Indigenous research), methods (where the knowledge in the Guide came from), and background (Western's research landscape and principles).

**02 Part Two: Recommendations** provides recommended actions that the research community (researchers, faculty, staff, undergraduate and graduate students, and trainees) can take to conduct research in allyship **with** Indigenous Peoples, organizations, and/or communities, especially those local to Western University.

Throughout this Guide, the term Indigenous is used to respectfully refer to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples—three distinct and diverse groups recognized as the Indigenous Peoples living in Canada on Turtle Island. While many of the principles outlined may also be relevant and applicable in research with international Indigenous communities, this Guide specifically relates to research involving Indigenous Peoples of Turtle Island and honouring the unique relationship and associated responsibilities they carry.

## Contacts and Additional Supports

While [The Office of Indigenous Initiatives](#) champions and leads Indigenous strategic decisions, builds collaborative and community-engaged partnerships, and supports campus partners in implementing Western's Indigenous Strategic Plan, [Western Research](#) leads Indigenous research support, administration, and guidance. Both teams work in close collaboration.

Support for Indigenous research is provided through Western Research. If you are planning to undertake or are currently engaged in Indigenous research, it is strongly recommended that you connect with Western Research for guidance, resources, and support.

For support, visit the [Western Research Indigenous research webpage](#).

### WESTERN RESEARCH CONTACTS

**Katie Big-Canoe**  
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*Western Research*  
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**Mariam Hayward**  
*Director, Inclusive Research*  
*Excellence and Impact,*  
*Western Research*  
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INDIGENOUS  
SERVICES



# PART ONE: INTRODUCTION







# PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

Part One provides an overview on the purpose (how to use the Guide and how to prepare when undertaking Indigenous research), methods (where the knowledge in the Guide came from), and background (Western’s research landscape and principles).

## Who is this Guide for?

This Guide is intended for Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers, staff, faculty, undergraduate and graduate students (henceforth referred to as students), and trainees who are interested in conducting Indigenous research *in a good way* and in allyship **with** Indigenous Peoples, organizations, and/or

communities, especially those local to Western University. **Indigenous research** extends beyond community-based approaches to encompass all forms and disciplines that have potential implications for Indigenous Peoples, their data, Lands (water, air, plants, animals), and/or knowledges.

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### WHERE DOES THIS KNOWLEDGE COME FROM?

This Guide is based on an environmental scan and engagements with forty-one (41) participants, including Indigenous and non-Indigenous allied faculty, staff, and students at Western, and community members between July and October 2024.

This Guide foregrounds the voices of Western University’s Indigenous community because of their localized living experiences and understanding that recognition is what matters most.

## How can I use this Guide?

All resources and references mentioned in this Guide can be accessed by clicking on their respective titles.

### THIS GUIDE:

- **Is only one resource** that can be used as a starting point alongside your personal research, engagement, and work (it is not exhaustive).
- **Is a living document** that should be updated as we all learn and grow from new experiences and research.
- **Does not make you an allied researcher**, allyship is a way of living and not a status that can be obtained or self-declared.
- **Is localized and specific to Western University's research community**; it reflects the voices of Indigenous and allied faculty, staff, students and trainees, and community members who supported this work.

# Principles for Ind

Accepting Truth before  
jumping into Reconciliation

Committing to unsettling;  
and creating new pathways  
forward together

Honouring Indigenous  
sovereignty and self-  
determination in  
decision-making and  
relationship-building  
processes

Nurturing culturally inclusive  
and trauma-informed  
learning environments

Supporting the reclamation of Indigenous  
knowledge systems & lands through Indigenous-  
led cultural resurgence & language revitalization



Medallion created by: Karsyn Summers (Oneida Nation of the Thames). Principles for Ind

# Indigenous Allyship



## Background

As calls for decolonization and reconciliation in research continue to grow, there is an urgent need to equip researchers, staff, students, and trainees with guidance on how to engage in ways that respect Indigenous sovereignty, support community-led knowledge creation, and follow culturally appropriate **protocols**. A common question from those new to Indigenous research is, “Where do I begin?”. While there is no checklist that one can complete to become an ally in research, this Guide offers a starting point—fostering accountability, building trust, and helping ensure that research contributes meaningfully to Indigenous well-being and self-determination. It is also intended to strengthen institutional awareness and capacity to “advance reconciliation with Indigenous Communities,” as mandated in [Towards Western at 150](#) and emphasized in Western Research’s strategic plan, [Mobilize for Impact!](#) and the collective responsibility to uphold treaties and Indigenous data sovereignty.

Indigenous Allyship drawn from [A Guide Towards Indigenous Allyship at Western University](#).





# **PART TWO: RECOMMENDATIONS**







## PART TWO: RECOMMENDATIONS

Part Two provides recommended actions that researchers, faculty, staff, students, and trainees can take to conduct research in allyship with Indigenous Peoples, organizations, and/or communities. Guidance on the practical application of recommendations is also provided and includes context, rationale, and potential misstep(s) that a person might make, and identification of internal/external resources directly related to each recommendation.

Part Two is organized by four broad recommendations that emerged from the engagements and research that informed this Guide, which include:

- 01 Learn and unlearn by educating ourselves.

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- 02 **Unsettle** ourselves through continual self-reflection.

---

- 03 Listen to and support **community-led research** (& respect the right to refuse).

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- 04 Advocate to drive structural change in support of Indigenous Research.



# 01

## Learn and unlearn by educating ourselves

**What to do (Recommended Action):** Before asking an Indigenous faculty, staff, community member, trainee, or student to help you or others learn, do your own research to educate yourself. We have included a few resources here, but there are others included throughout this Guide.

**Why do it (Rationale):** Indigenous faculty, staff, trainees, and students are frequently being approached by non-Indigenous researchers to assist with topics that do not relate to their identities or research interests. For example, it is not appropriate to approach a First Nation person with a question about Inuit culture, as it does not match their identity, and one cannot assume it is their area of expertise. As a result of this over-engagement in work that is unpaid, emotionally exhausting, and outside of their regular job duties, Indigenous faculty and staff are frustrated, experience challenges completing their regular work, and are at risk of **burnout**.

**How to do it (Reflection Questions & Resources):** It is important to seek out community-specific and community-vetted resources. Sometimes this information is available on community websites or through a quick internet search. Noting community endorsement of the resource (either by posting it on their website or authorship by a community member or organization) is important to validating the information. Conducting independent research prior to engaging an Indigenous faculty member, staff, trainee, student, or community member, should include a focus on local histories, cultures, languages, priorities, and concerns. Researchers should also learn about any community research and / or consultation protocols. Further, it is important to avoid assumptions about lack of Indigenous research or authors, as Indigenous scholarship can be found in a wide range of disciplines. In Euro-Western scientific fields, it is often assumed that Indigenous scholars are not present, but this is usually due to limited visibility rather than absence. Taking the time to search more broadly can reveal valuable contributions and support more inclusive research practices.



#### WHAT TO AVOID:

**Tokenism:** Engaging an Indigenous person only because they are Indigenous and not for the knowledge they bring is tokenistic. (See [glossary](#) of terms for fulsome definition)

**Homogenizing and Pan-Indigenizing:** Expecting that Indigenous faculty, staff, trainees, and students know all things Indigenous erases the diversity among Indigenous Peoples, groups, and communities.

**Over-engaging:** Engaging Indigenous people too frequently or engaging them in unpaid, emotionally challenging work outside of their regular duties.

**Tokenism:** can be difficult to recognize because it creates an optic of inclusion and fairness by virtue of bringing members of an equity-denied group into a space without transforming the power dynamics through meaningful structural or systemic changes. **Indigenous tokenism** can look like:

- hiring an Indigenous person for a position without giving them decision-making power, influence, or a budget to make meaningful changes.
- onboarding an Indigenous member to a committee without listening to their ideas or validating their living experiences with institutional racism.
- inviting an Indigenous scholar to give a lecture/key note on a topic that does not relate to their research expertise.
- inviting an Indigenous scholar/trainee/Elder or community member to participate on your grant just because they are Indigenous.

Below are a few recommended resources to get you started. While a few are intended for instructors, researchers can use these resources to learn and unlearn in ways that will support research in allyship with Indigenous Peoples, organizations, and/or communities:



***A Guide to Indigenous Allyship at Western University*** contains important information about the local Indigenous and settler colonial history and context of the land on which Western University is located. This includes information about local First Nations, treaties, and the local residential school history.



***Indigenous Teaching and Learning Series*** is an online education series for university instructors designed to enhance their understanding of the colonial history and context of the academy, as well as decolonizing, Indigenizing, and other transformational movements taking place (Centre for Teaching and Learning, 2023).



***Indigenous Learning Bundles: Maatookiiyng gaa-miinigoowiziying (Sharing Our Gifts)*** is a digital resource created to help Western and Affiliate instructors integrate Indigenous knowledge and perspectives into their courses ethically and culturally. This project provides Indigenous-led learning bundles, each equivalent to a lesson, which focus on Indigenous themes and emphasize Indigenous concepts, theories, and ways of knowing (Indigenous Initiatives, n.d.).



***Biindigen: Indigenous Learning Circle*** offers Western staff and faculty a space to explore Indigenization and reconciliation through discussions, books, documentaries, and podcasts. Co-organized by Western Libraries, Western Research, Student Experience, the Human Rights Office, and the Office of Indigenous Initiatives, the group meets at least four times a year to socialize, listen, and engage in critical conversations on Indigenization, decolonization,

and reconciliation at Western (Indigenous Initiatives, n.d.).



***Mbwaachidiwag: Podcast*** explores the complexities of embedding Indigenization and decolonization in institutional practices through conversations with Indigenous Peoples and allies hosted by Sara Mai Chitty, Curriculum & Pedagogy Advisor with Western's Office of Indigenous Initiatives (Office of Indigenous Initiatives, n.d.). Use this Podcast to gain insights into how Indigenous Peoples and allies can bridge divides through research and curriculum development (Indigenous Initiatives, n.d.).



***Online Learning Modules: '4 Seasons of Reconciliation' and 'The Path'*** are two online courses offering foundational knowledge on Indigenous Peoples and Reconciliation in Canada and are both available on OWL Sakai for all staff, faculty, trainees, and students at Western. '4 Seasons of Reconciliation' provides a 3.5-hour module

that addresses Truth and Reconciliation, Indigenous contributions, and dismantling stereotypes. 'The Path' created by NVision, is a five-part series that offers cultural awareness and background on First Nations, Métis, and Inuit in Canada (Indigenous Initiatives, n.d.). Use these resources to learn and unlearn about Indigenous and colonial history and context.



**Indigenous Community Research Partnerships (ICRP)** is an online open education training resource at Queen's University. It is designed to assist researchers who are new to research in partnerships with Inuit, Métis, and First Nations ("Indigenous") communities, or who are researchers-in-training, to:

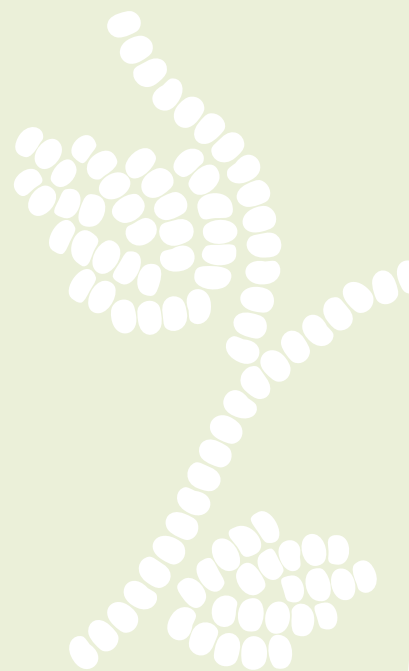
- Operationalize regulatory policy requirements and research directives;
- Ensure equitable inclusion of Indigenous and Western-oriented knowledge in research systems; and,
- In the case of Indigenous-specific enquiry, to privilege or give primacy to Indigenous ways of knowing and doing" (Queen's University Office of Indigenous Initiatives, 2024).



**Unpacking and Addressing Anti-Indigenous Racism** is an online module that explores the manifestations of **racism** and **discrimination** against Indigenous Peoples in Canada while outlining strategies to advance meaningful action in personal, professional, and community settings.



**Western's Smudging Resource** was created to answer frequently asked questions about smudging. Smudging is an Indigenous spiritual and cultural practice that involves burning sacred medicines (e.g., tobacco, sweetgrass, sage, cedar) to cleanse a room, person, or group (Indigenous Initiatives, n.d.). Use this resource to answer any frequently asked questions about smudging protocol, including how to do it in a respectful way. Please note that not all Indigenous Peoples and/or communities' smudge. Smudging is a practice rooted in many First Nations traditions, but it may not be part of Métis, Inuit, or specific Nation-based practices or protocols. It is important to seek guidance from the community you are working with to understand which ceremonial practices are appropriate and meaningful in their context.



#### **ASK YOURSELF:**

Before engaging an Indigenous person with a request for knowledge, ask yourself:

1. Can I find this knowledge myself through existing resources?
2. Is this knowledge the person holds?
3. Is it relevant to their Indigenous identity and/or Nation/community?
4. Does it reflect their area of expertise/study/research?
5. Am I providing this person with enough time to reflect and engage?
6. Is this ask going to involve **emotional labour**, and if so, how can I support this person?
7. Is this a safe space and time to ask?
8. How will I provide appropriate compensation to acknowledge this work?

*These questions are adapted from the [Guide Towards Indigenous Allyship at Western University](#).*

## CASE STUDY

# Tokenism over True Partnership

**Scenario:** An Indigenous scholar receives a message from an unfamiliar research lab stating:

*"Dear [Indigenous Scholar],*

*X Lab is applying to X Grant.*

*We see a great fit because of your expertise in X. Additionally, this grant requires knowledge users, would there be any organization within your network that deals with **Indigenous data sovereignty** that we could reach out to work with?*

*At this stage you are only required to confirm your participation. Please let me know if you have any questions."*

**What Went Wrong:** This outreach, while seemingly inclusive, reflects a transactional approach rather than a relational one. The scholar is approached by an unfamiliar individual last-minute, primarily to fulfill a grant requirement rather than to co-develop research priorities. It places the burden on the scholar to provide further contacts, without compensation or clarity on their role.

**Why It Matters:** True allyship in Indigenous research requires relationship-building, co-creation, and respect for Indigenous protocols and data governance. There are some important considerations when inviting Indigenous scholars to participate as team members in a grant: two important ones being whether you have an existing relationship with that scholar and reciprocity. When outreach is done with a preconceived agenda in mind (e.g., a grant) and no prior relationship, it is considered tokenism. Token involvement can harm trust and perpetuate **extractive research** practices.

**Better Practice:** Before deciding to apply for the grant, X Lab could have engaged the Indigenous scholar in meaningful dialogue about shared interests and research priorities. They could have asked, "Would you be interested in co-developing a proposal with us?" or "I am interested in your research, would my skillset be useful to your research team?" and ensured any organizational outreach came from relationships built with consent, reciprocity, and adequate time.





# 02

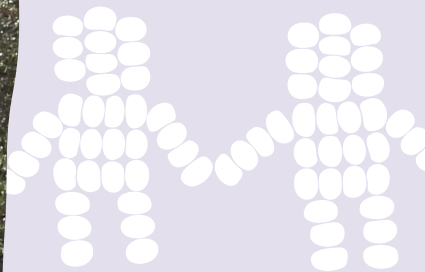
## Unsettle ourselves through continual self-reflection

**What to do (Recommended Action):** Unsettle yourself by self-reflecting on your **positionality** and responsibilities before you begin working with Indigenous Peoples or communities.

**Why do it (Rationales):** Decolonization starts internally, and reflecting and unsettling is necessary in order to work with Indigenous Peoples and communities in a good way. Learning about who you are, where you come from, whose Land you are on, and why you are doing your research, can help you to understand your responsibilities and build relationships with Indigenous research partners. Further, critical self-reflection allows you to confront preconceived notions or biases you may hold about Indigenous Peoples or Knowledge, or yourself. While the process may be intellectually and emotionally uncomfortable, challenging beliefs rooted in colonial systems is essential to unsettling.

For many Indigenous people, it is protocol to introduce themselves in a way that makes visible their relationships to the Land they are on, as well as the community, Nation, and Clan to which they belong. Unlike many non-Indigenous people, these introductions reflect a deep awareness of **relational accountability**. Ultimately, reflecting on one's positionality is a meaningful way for non-Indigenous researchers to prepare themselves—by considering their own lived realities, relationships, and responsibilities before engaging with Indigenous communities. It is also important to reflect on the relationships and associated responsibilities you have to the land, water, air, as well as animal and plant life, including being mindful of the impacts of your research.

**How to do it (Reflection Questions & Resources):** Unsettling requires continual critical self-reflection / **reflexivity**, including on your positionality and responsibilities to the space and place you are taking up and what that means in terms of how you conduct research. The reflection questions and resources below can support you in understanding your positionality in relation to the research and unsettling on an ongoing basis.



#### **WHAT TO AVOID:**

##### ***Performative Allyship:***

Undertaking actions that do not create meaningful positive change for Indigenous Peoples to make oneself appear to others as an Ally, often for personal or professional benefit. Examples include:

- scripted land acknowledgements that do not clearly link to one's positionality and action.
- positionality statements that centre one's family history without acknowledging one's relationship to settler colonialism (where you live, what traditional lands you are on, your treaty responsibilities, how you got to this land and how you benefited from the colonial project of Canada).

## HOW DO I PREPARE A POSITIONALITY STATEMENT?

A positionality statement explains your personal context in relation to the social structures, people, and land you work within, with, and on. This helps others understand the place from which you are speaking. To prepare a positionality statement, you can draw on reflection questions provided in the [Guide Towards Indigenous Allyship at Western University](#) and [More than Words: A Guide to Land Acknowledgments at Western University](#), which are designed to foster a deeper understanding of one's relationship to Indigenous lands and communities. These questions can guide you in exploring your identity, privileges, and historical context in relation to the communities involved in your research.

“

Decolonization starts internally, and reflecting and unsettling is necessary in order to work with Indigenous Peoples and communities in a good way.





#### **ASK YOURSELF:**

Before engaging in research with and for Indigenous people or communities, ask yourself:

- 1.** What benefits and privileges have I enjoyed from settling in Canada? How does this impact my experience as a researcher in this space?
- 2.** On whose Traditional Territory am I situated (either in person or virtually)? On whose Traditional Territory am I intending to conduct research?
  - How have I and might I benefit from living on and performing research on this land?
- 3.** What are the Treaties of the Land I am on?
  - What do they say?
  - What are my Treaty responsibilities?
- 4.** What is my motivation and intention in taking on this research?
  - How will I stay accountable to myself?
- 5.** What are my values and beliefs about research?
  - How are these similar or different from Indigenous values and beliefs about research?
- 6.** Where do my values and beliefs come from?
  - How have they benefitted me by allowing me to maintain my power and privilege?
  - How are they harmful to Indigenous Peoples?
  - What can I do to learn, unlearn, and grow?

# 03

## Listen to and support community-led research (& respect the right to refuse)

**What to do (Recommended Action):** Conduct community-based and community-led research; this is research conducted with communities and not on and about communities and includes respecting Indigenous data sovereignty and research protocols.

In practice, refusal can take various forms: a direct “no,” a “not now” indicating timing concerns, or even a lack of response, which may signify disinterest or other priorities. Researchers should interpret all such responses as valid expressions of the community’s wishes and be prepared to respectfully accept them, remaining open to future engagement only if and when the community is ready.

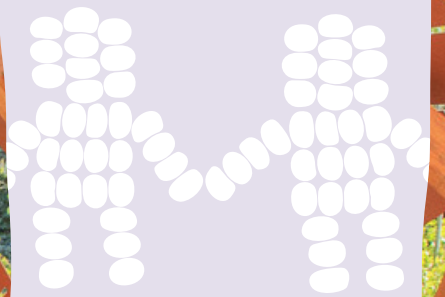
**Why do it (Rationale):** Indigenous communities continue to experience harm from non-Indigenous researchers who engage in extractive practices; often taking knowledge from communities for personal or academic gain, without offering clear or meaningful pathways to reciprocity or even sharing research findings back in return. This has led Indigenous communities to be wary of researchers in general, but especially non-Indigenous researchers.

While this lack of trust can be a contributing factor to refusals, Indigenous communities may decline to engage in research for many reasons. For example, the research may not be relevant, they may not have enough staff to provide dedicated support, or other matters may take priority in the community at that time.

The right to refusal is a core principle in research with Indigenous communities and means that communities have the authority to decline participation at any stage, request changes, or withdraw from a project entirely, without facing pressure or consequences. Silence or non-response should be respected as a valid form of refusal, rather than interpreted as indecision or consent. More information is presented below in the “What do I do if a community isn’t responding?” section on [page 36](#).

**How to do it (Reflection Questions & Resources):** Community-based and community-led-research responds to priorities and requests the community has shared publicly, with you directly, or to your partners and that will clearly benefit the community. This is different from extractive research practices that centre on advancing a body of knowledge but largely benefit the researcher’s career, while the community may see little benefit or even experience harm.





#### WHAT TO AVOID:

***Extractive Research:*** Conducting research on, about, and for communities, based on our own professional interests and/or perspectives of benefits and needs.

***Entitlement:*** Approaching Indigenous community engagement in your research with a sense of **entitlement** or expectation that they will support and approve. This extends to failing to respect their right to refusal or otherwise responding poorly to refusals. It also extends to demonstrating entitlement to an explanation in the event of a refusal.

***Settler Fragility:*** Becoming defensive when a refusal, feedback, or request for change to your research is brought forward by an Indigenous person or community, instead of reflecting on and learning from the experience about how to make your research more community-led. Fragility often manifests in decentering Indigenous community priorities or historic harms caused by research.

## CASE STUDY

# Recognizing Red Flags That Can Lead to Silence or Refusal

**Scenario:** An Indigenous organization received an unsolicited email from an international student seeking to conduct Indigenous research. The email included the following:

*“To whom it may concern,*

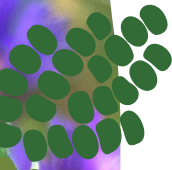
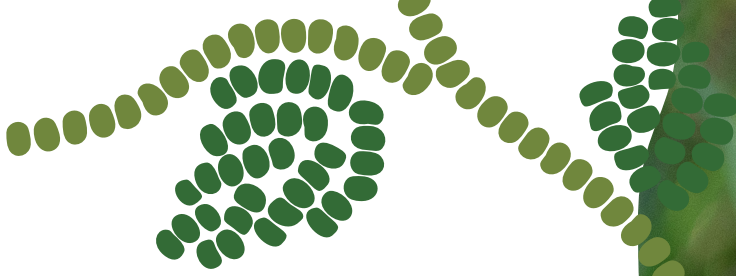
*I am writing to inquire about the possibility of conducting X research with Indigenous Peoples, regarding X in the community. I am currently a graduate student at [X international university].*

*I am aiming to hold focus group interviews with approximately 10 participants. These sessions would last about an hour each. The interviews would be recorded (audio only) for transcription and discourse analysis; no audio will be published in the paper participants will be anonymized. Requests for certain responses to be omitted will be honoured.*

*I will submit an ethics application before any research is carried out and will involve the community throughout the process. More information will be available once my proposal is approved. I aim to travel to Canada to carry out this research in June, allowing time for analysis and dissertation submission by early September.*

*I look forward to your reply and am happy to answer any questions about myself or the project.”*

**What went wrong – Key red flags:** While the email was polite and detailed, it raised several concerns from the perspective of the Indigenous organization: 1) It demonstrates a one-sided request and that the student researcher is uninformed of the local context and diversity of Indigenous Peoples in Canada. They are interested in *studying* Indigenous Peoples, not doing research *with* Indigenous Peoples; 2) The request is very prescriptive with no room for Indigenous Peoples to be involved in the co-creation of the research – this approach reflects “helicopter research” where data is extracted/collected without



long-term engagement or benefit to the community; 3) Beyond their name and institutional affiliation, there is no positionality to demonstrate how they come to this work or indication of prior experience or relationships with Indigenous Peoples/communities – this raises questions about accountability and ethical orientation; 4) There is no mention of how Indigenous data sovereignty will be upheld; 5) There is no mention of compensation/reciprocity for the organization or participant's time and knowledge – the interaction is framed as extractive rather than reciprocal; and, 6) Indigenous People are expected to work within the researcher's imposed timeline with little regard for community and organizational timelines, capacities or protocols. This undermines the principle of respectful, community-paced research.

**Why it matters:** Indigenous Peoples are not a monolith; each Nation, community, or group has its own governance structures, research priorities, and protocols. It is important to understand who you are engaging with and how you are engaging. Effective and ethical research begins with meaningful relationships. An initial email may be the only opportunity to make a positive impression – red flags, even if unintended, can quickly close doors. Poorly framed outreach can reinforce colonial research practices and erode trust. Indigenous organizations frequently share information and experiences with one another, and reputations – good or bad – can circulate widely and influence future research opportunities.

**Better Practice:** Begin with humility and respect. Do not center your needs and assume a community wants or needs your research. Instead, invest in building a relationship – introduce yourself as a person, not just a researcher and extend an invitation to meet over food to learn about the community needs and priorities. Go in with an open mind and without the expectation that a research partnership will result from your relationship building. How you engage may determine if an Indigenous community is willing to recommend you to another community whose research needs may be better aligned with your research expertise. Be prepared to listen, learn and willing to reshape your expectations in response to community input and priorities.



## HOW DO I RESPECT INDIGENOUS DATA SOVEREIGNTY?

There are four commonly used distinction-based Indigenous ethics and data sovereignty protocols. It is important to note that not all Indigenous Peoples or communities will recognize these protocols. Many communities have other community-specific protocols in place, which take priority. It is important to ask. You can access each of these frameworks below.

- [The First Nations Principles of OCAP®](#)
- [The National Inuit Strategy on Research \(NISR\)](#)
- [Principles of Ethical Métis Research](#)
- [The USAI \(Utility, Self-voicing, Access, and Inter-relatedity\) Research Framework](#)

For more information about Indigenous Data Sovereignty see the Glossary of Key Terms in this report as well as the following resources:

- [Western University's Institutional Strategy on Research Data Management](#)
- [Indigenous Data Sovereignty – University of Toronto Libraries](#)
- “Indigenous data, Indigenous methodologies and Indigenous data sovereignty” in *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* by Maggie Walter and Michele Suina

“  
It is important to be transparent about your intentions, ensure mutual benefits, and respect the community’s right to give consent and to withdraw consent at any time.

## HOW DO I DETERMINE WHICH CONTACT OR COMMUNITY TO ENGAGE?

Identify which communities are directly connected to or impacted by the focus of the research. If there is a geographical location to the research, consider using [Whose Land](#), an interactive map of Indigenous territories.

Engagement should be meaningful and relevant, respecting the connection between the community's experiences and the research goals. Additionally, if you or your department or research team have established relationships with specific communities, consider building on those connections—while ensuring the community's interest and consent for involvement in your current research.

## HOW DO I GO ABOUT ENGAGING AND WHAT ARE MY RESPONSIBILITIES WHEN ENGAGING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND COMMUNITIES?

To engage respectfully with Indigenous communities, approach with humility and an understanding of their cultures and protocols. Prioritize listening, build genuine relationships, and follow community guidance on proper engagement practices. Additionally, it is important to be transparent about your intentions, ensure mutual benefits, and respect the community's right to give consent and to withdraw consent at any time. Researchers have a responsibility to foster trust, remain accountable, and honour the community's priorities throughout the research.

There are many resources that can support you in engaging with Indigenous Peoples and communities respectfully. Here are a few excellent ones to get you started:

- [J. Tobias, C. Richmond, I. Luginah \(2013\) Community-Based Participatory Research \(CBPR\) with Indigenous Communities: Producing Respectful and Reciprocal Research.](#)
- The **'Six R's of Indigenous Research'**—respect, relevance, responsibility, reciprocity, relationships, and refusal—are guiding principles developed through Indigenous scholarship. Originating from Kirkness & Barnhardt's (1991) 4Rs and expanded by Johnston, McGregor & Restoule (2018), these principles emphasize respecting and preserving the integrity and knowledge of Indigenous Peoples (Johnston, McGregor, & Restoule, 2018; Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991; Western University, 2022, p. 11).
- Castleden, H., Morgan, V. S., & Lamb, C. (2012). "[I spent the first year drinking tea": Exploring Canadian University Researchers' Perspectives on community based participatory research involving Indigenous Peoples.](#) *Canadian Geographies / Géographies Canadiennes*, 56(2), 160–179. Provides a strong foundational explanation of the importance of relationship building in Indigenous research.

- ♦ **Note:** this article typically requires access to online academic databases."
- [Tri-Council Policy Statement 2 \(2022\) – Chapter 9: Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples of Canada](#) provides a framework for ethical research involving Indigenous Peoples in Canada, aiming to foster respectful relationships and encourage meaningful collaboration (Government of Canada, 2022). It acknowledges the unique cultures and values of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities, emphasizing reciprocity as a foundation for beneficial relationships (Government of Canada, 2022). Chapter 9 outlines the minimum standards and expectations that researchers are required to meet when engaging in research with Indigenous Peoples, serving as a baseline for ethical practice.
- [UManitoba Framework for Research Engagement](#) offers guidance for establishing meaningful, respectful partnerships that support shared excellence in collaborative, community-driven research. Use the framework to ensure that partnerships with Indigenous communities are characterized by ethical accountability and responsibility to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples as well as to the academic community (University of Manitoba, 2024).



Ultimately, researchers are encouraged to consult community-specific protocols, Elders, and local Knowledge Keepers, to fully honour the unique contexts and needs of each Indigenous community.

### **WHAT DO I DO IF A COMMUNITY ISN'T RESPONDING?**

If a community isn't responding, approach the situation with patience and respect. Indigenous communities often have other priorities or limited capacity, so allow time for a response without following up too frequently. Additionally, reflect on your initial outreach to ensure it was respectful, clearly aligned with the community's values and priorities, and was rooted in the spirit of reciprocity. Ask yourself: how does your request support their needs and/or priorities? Was honorarium offered in recognition of their time? Were cultural protocols followed? Review the case study located on [page 32](#). You can also ask a colleague to review initial communication for a second opinion. However, if more extensive expertise is required, contact a [Western Research Indigenous Research Specialist](#).

A lack of response might also signal that your request could be adjusted to better meet the community's interests and needs. A respectful and constructive approach is to pause and reflect on how the request aligns with the community's priorities and values. Feedback can be sought, if possible, through trusted intermediaries or community liaisons, showing genuine willingness to listen and adapt.

Finally, recognize that silence may be a form of response; if the community chooses not to engage, respect their decision and remain open to collaboration only if and when they express interest.

### **WHO CAN PROVIDE CONSENT ON BEHALF OF A COMMUNITY?**

Consent protocols vary widely across Indigenous communities. Some communities have designated representatives, councils, or Elders who hold the authority to provide consent on behalf of the collective. However, a great way to start is by asking the community how they approach collective representation and consent. In some cases, consent may need to come from a governing body, while in others, specific individuals such as Elders, Knowledge Keepers, or community leaders may be appropriate contacts. Nonetheless, projects require both individual consent from research participants and collective consent from the community. Ensure you are honouring both personal and community-level permissions as needed.

### **HOW DO I IDENTIFY APPROPRIATE REPRESENTATION?**

To identify appropriate representation, begin by consulting with community leaders, Elders, or Indigenous research offices and/or band offices who can provide guidance on individuals authorized to represent the community in your research area. Each Indigenous community has unique protocols

for designating representatives, so it is important to ask about these practices to ensure that you are engaging with people who hold the appropriate roles. Knowledge Keepers and Elders can often offer insights into who has the authority to speak on behalf of the community, helping to align your research with cultural and contextual considerations. Avoid assuming that any individual from the community can serve as a representative; instead, respect the community's governance and decision-making processes to foster authentic engagement.

“

Recognize that silence may be a form of response; if the community chooses not to engage, respect their decision and remain open to collaboration only if and when they express interest.



**HOW DO I DETERMINE HOW MUCH ENGAGEMENT IS THE RIGHT AMOUNT? HOW CAN I BUILD MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS?**

Incorporating relationship-building into the research timeline is essential when working with Indigenous communities. Building meaningful, reciprocal relationships will take as long or as little time as needed to foster trust and mutual respect. This involves actively engaging with the community by attending events and activities, when invited, and dedicating time to listen and understand the community's perspectives. Following the community's lead on ways to reciprocate is key, ensuring that the relationship is mutually beneficial. This may include leveraging your influence to create space for

Indigenous voices, offering financial compensation, and respecting practices of gifting and reciprocity, which are integral to honouring Indigenous relationships and engagement.

- **Community-Driven Approach:** Begin by asking the Indigenous community how they envision their role in the research and what level of engagement feels appropriate to them. Each community has its own protocols and preferences, so understanding these expectations will help you align your engagement to their standards.
- **Respect Relationship-Building:** Allocate time for relationship-building in the research timeline and understand that engagement goes beyond

formal meetings—it involves listening, showing up when invited, and being present. Engage as much as needed to build trust and ensure that community members feel valued and respected throughout the research process. This means beginning engagement well before any grant submission or ethics application is due. Often Indigenous scholars receive “urgent” last-minute requests to join research teams or review documents with little turnaround time. Indigenous Peoples, organizations, and communities often operate on different timelines than academic institutions, and researchers must plan ahead accordingly to engage meaningfully and respectfully.

“

Projects require both individual consent from research participants and collective consent from the community.





- **Ongoing Communication:** Engagement is often continuous rather than a single action. Regularly check in with the community to make sure your level of involvement remains appropriate and responsive to their needs, adjusting as required.
- **Acknowledge Power Dynamics:** Reflect on the power dynamics in the research relationship and ensure that the community has an active, equal role. Balance your contributions with active listening, ensuring that the community's voices guide the research.

Ultimately, “the right amount” of engagement is determined collaboratively with the community, emphasizing respect, adaptability,

and a commitment to meet their needs and priorities in the research partnership. You can consult [Community Research Partnerships Training](#) for more information (Queen’s University, n.d.).

### **HOW DO I RESPECTFULLY WORK WITH INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY MEMBERS?**

[Working in Good Ways: A Framework and Resources for Indigenous Community Engagement](#) provides ethical practices, cultural humility, and provides tools for fostering meaningful relationships and aligning efforts with community priorities. Use this framework to work with Indigenous communities in ways that emphasize collaboration, shared benefits, and the integration of Indigenous knowledge and protocols (Ferland, Chen, & Villagrán Becerra, 2021).

[Guidelines for Working with Indigenous Community Members](#) is a critical resource if your research involves working with Indigenous community members. Use these Guidelines to understand how to work with Indigenous community members in reciprocal and respectful ways (Indigenous Initiatives, n.d.). They provide cultural protocols for respectfully engaging, hosting, and compensating Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and other community members for sharing their knowledge and time (Indigenous Initiatives, n.d.).



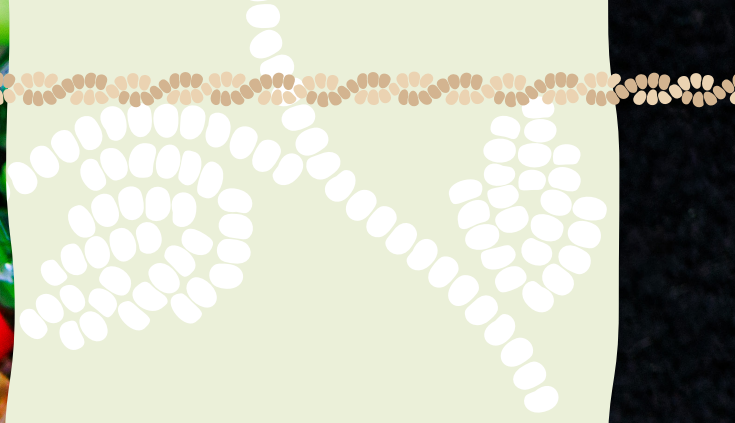


## HOW DO I RESPECTFULLY WORK WITH ELDERS?

[Considerations for Meaningful Collaboration: Highlights from a Conversation with Indigenous Elders](#) and [Guidelines for Working with Indigenous Community Members](#) are critical resources if your research involves working with Indigenous Elders. Use this Guide to access guidance for meaningful collaboration with Indigenous Elders, focusing on respect, relationship-building, and cultural significance (Indigenous Initiatives, n.d.). It details steps for engaging with **Elders** before, during, and after events, emphasizing the importance of honouring their knowledge, offering honoraria, and maintaining culturally appropriate protocols (Indigenous Initiatives, n.d.).

## HOW DO I RESPECTFULLY WORK WITH INDIGENOUS STUDENTS?

[Guide for Working with Indigenous Students](#) is a critical resource if your research involves working with Indigenous students. Use this Guide to better understand and respond to the needs, realities, and barriers of Indigenous students in university settings (Western University, n.d.). It also highlights their role in fostering equitable changes at organizational, professional, and personal levels (Western University, n.d.).



### ASK YOURSELF:

When engaging in community-based and/or community-led research, ask yourself:

1. Do I have a strong positive relationship with this community?
  - Did I spend enough time building a relationship with this community?
  - Has the community participated in research with me in the past?
2. How can I ensure that my research is relevant to (a priority for) the community?
3. How am I following the community's research ethics, consent, and data sovereignty protocols?
  - Who decides on behalf of the community whether the community will participate in research? (e.g., Chief and Council, a Community Research Ethics Board, or another mechanism)
  - How am I including community members in decision-making processes throughout the research?
  - What steps am I taking to advocate for Western to uphold the community's rights throughout the research process?
4. How am I treating the community as an equal partner throughout the research process?
  - Am I prepared to let the community lead discussions around the timing, use, and dissemination of research results?
  - Have I created space for the community to share their expertise and insights in shaping the research methodologies? How am I attributing this expertise?
  - Am I open to adjusting my research approach based on community input and feedback?
  - How will I ensure that the research findings are shared in a way that is accessible and beneficial to the community?
5. How am I fostering long-term, respectful relationships with the community beyond the scope of this research project?

# 04

## Advocate to drive structural change in support of Indigenous Research

**What to do (Recommended Action):** Once you commit to and begin the work to understand your positionality, you can begin to honour your responsibilities by taking action to create meaningful change.

**Why do it (Rationale):** While critical self-reflection is key, committing to allyship in Indigenous research requires using your influence and privilege to enact purposeful actions that challenge and transform colonial structures. Indigenous Peoples frequently share stories about their voices being silenced or disregarded, and non-Indigenous colleagues becoming defensive when being called out for a misstep. It is evident that complacency among many non-Indigenous colleagues exists in terms of institutional practices that are discriminatory or that otherwise create barriers for Indigenous Peoples and communities because they are seen as “just the way things are” or viewed as “this is not my problem”. However, reconciliation and equity are collective responsibilities, and all individuals have a role to play in challenging systemic inequities. Some non-Indigenous people may hesitate to speak up, unsure whether it’s their place or fearing they’ll say the wrong thing. But silence can reinforce harmful structures. It is essential to recognize that advocating for structural change does not require lived experience of oppression—it requires a commitment to justice. As Western University has committed to Reconciliation there must be concrete action taken to fulfill the associated responsibilities and remain accountable. For more detail, please see Western University’s [Indigenous Strategic Plan \(2016\)](#).

**How to do it (Reflection Questions & Resources):** This will include listening to and learning from Indigenous Peoples to understand how you can be supportive. Effective allyship may involve advocating for Indigenous leadership, challenging harmful policies, creating safe spaces, amplifying Indigenous voices, or speaking up when you see systemic racism in action. It also requires action to ensure Indigenous research receives adequate support and resources, such as dedicated staff, funding, and infrastructure. Often when you encounter an institutional barrier, you are not the only one who experiences it, or who will encounter it. You might figure out a loophole, or an exception might be made for your project. However, it is important to consider how you can use your power and privilege to change processes, procedures, and policies so that they are more inclusive of Indigenous research processes going forward. Generally, you can leverage your power and privilege to make a difference.

“

Committing to allyship in Indigenous research requires using your influence and privilege to enact purposeful actions that challenge and transform colonial structures.





#### WHAT TO AVOID:

**Complacency:** Failure to challenge systemic and structural barriers for community-led Indigenous research because this is “just the way things are”. Policies, committee composition, and budgets are examples of structures that often drive research and can be challenged and changed.

**Inaction:** Doing nothing to question or confront colonial systems and structures while they continue to cause harm equates to complicity.



## What is an appropriate budget for Indigenous engagement in research?

When creating a budget for research with Indigenous communities, it is essential to include costs for relationship-building and ensure fair compensation. Begin by addressing honoraria upfront, openly discussing the maximum available budget and confirming with the community if it meets their expectations. Respect their requests without negotiating, ensuring that compensation reflects the value of their time, knowledge, emotional labour, and cultural contributions. Additionally, plan for gifting, travel, catering (food and beverage) as appropriate and long-term engagement costs to support respectful and sustained collaboration. An appropriate budget demonstrates a commitment to ethical and meaningful engagement with Indigenous communities.

### EXAMPLE BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS FOR INDIGENOUS RESEARCH: CENTERING RELATIONALITY AND RECIPROCITY

When designing a research budget in partnership with Indigenous communities, it is essential to prioritize values of relationality, reciprocity, and respect. This involves going beyond conventional academic expense categories to ensure that community members are appropriately supported, honored, and resourced throughout the research process. The following budget lines are examples of items that can be considered:

#### 1. Food

- **Purpose:** To support relationship-building through shared meals, which are central to many Indigenous ways of gathering.
- **Examples:** Catering for community meetings, research team meetings, or small-group gatherings; grocery store gift cards for hosting meetings in home settings.

#### 2. Gifts

- **Purpose:** To acknowledge and respect community members' time, knowledge, and contributions.
- **Examples:** Culturally appropriate gifts (e.g., local crafts, traditional medicines), thank-you items for participants, Knowledge Keepers or Elders. Store suggestions for some Indigenous owned businesses:

[Iroqrafts](#)

[Kebaonish](#)

[Thunderbird Crafts & Trading Post](#)

[Whetung Ojibway Centre](#)

#### 3. Tobacco and Protocol Materials

- **Purpose:** To follow local protocols, especially when requesting knowledge or guidance from Elders.
- **Examples:** Tobacco, cloth, or other items specific to regional or Nation-based practices.

#### 4. Honoraria

- **Purpose:** To compensate individuals for their expertise, lived experience, and time.
- **Examples:** Set rates for Elders, youth advisors, cultural advisors, and other contributors based on local protocols or institutional guidelines developed in partnership with communities. See box on page 45.

## 5. Travel and Accommodations

- **Purpose:** To enable meaningful face-to-face engagement, including site visits, meetings or gatherings.
- **Examples:** Community members traveling to academic institutions, or researchers visiting the community; accommodations, meals, and mileage or flight costs included.

## 6. Trainees (In Community and Institution)

- **Purpose:** To build capacity and support learning for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous trainees.
- **Examples:** Wages or stipends for **community-based research** assistants; training support for students at institutions engaged in reciprocal learning.

## 7. Community Staff Salaries

- **Purpose:** To fairly compensate community members whose work contributes to or supports the research.
- **Examples:** Salaries for community research coordinators, translators, or administrative staff involved in the project.

## 8. Supplies and Equipment for Community Use

- **Purpose:** To ensure communities have the tools and infrastructure to fully participate in and benefit from research.
- **Examples:** Computers, tablets, internet access, recording equipment, or software licenses provided directly to the community.

## 9. Community Engagement and Dissemination

- **Purpose:** To share findings in ways that are accessible and useful to the community.
- **Examples:** Hosting community feedback sessions, creating visual summaries or videos, printing reports or booklets in local languages, or holding a knowledge-sharing gathering.

As mentioned in The Office of Indigenous Initiatives':


"Honoraria are provided on a non-routine basis to express gratitude and to recognize people for their time and expertise. Ideally, honoraria can be paid by direct deposit or a cheque. Processing honorarium requests early provides time for them to be fulfilled on the day of the event; organizers can do so by completing the [Indigenous honorarium payment form](#) (provided by their department managers and/or administrative officers) and following the weekly pay deadline. At a minimum, submit the payment form at least 4 weeks in advance of the event. Cheques will need to be picked up from Human Resources by the organizers to deliver directly on the day of the event. If direct deposit is preferred by the community member, please ensure they are aware that payments usually follow a schedule as set out by Human Resources. Your department's administrative officers should confirm that date with Human Resources.

It is important to engage with the invited guest/Elder to determine the appropriate honorarium. The guide below is a starting point.

**Recommended honorarium amounts (as of January 2025; please review the guidelines for most recent information) should be a minimum of:**

- \$100 per hour
- \$350 half-day
- \$700 full-day (Indigenous Initiatives, n.d.).

In addition, the rate should reflect time spent travelling to Western or other location, any time needed to prepare a presentation or talk, preparation meetings, and time to review and/or comment on documents or materials.



## HOW CAN I SUPPORT EXCELLENCE IN INDIGENOUS RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP AT WESTERN?

[Strengthening our Relations - Indigenous Research Final Report and Proposed Strategy](#)

builds on and promotes ongoing Indigenization efforts at Western, aligning with foundational initiatives such as [Western's Institutional Strategic Plan \(2021\)](#) and [Indigenous Strategic Plan \(2016\)](#). It also responds to the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission's \(TRC\) Calls to Action](#) within higher education and affirms Western's relationship and commitment to Indigenous students, staff, and faculty. Within these foundational documents, *Excellence in Indigenous Research and Scholarship* is identified as a key direction for Western. Use this report to understand and advocate for Western's responsibilities for meeting this goal (Richmond, 2021).

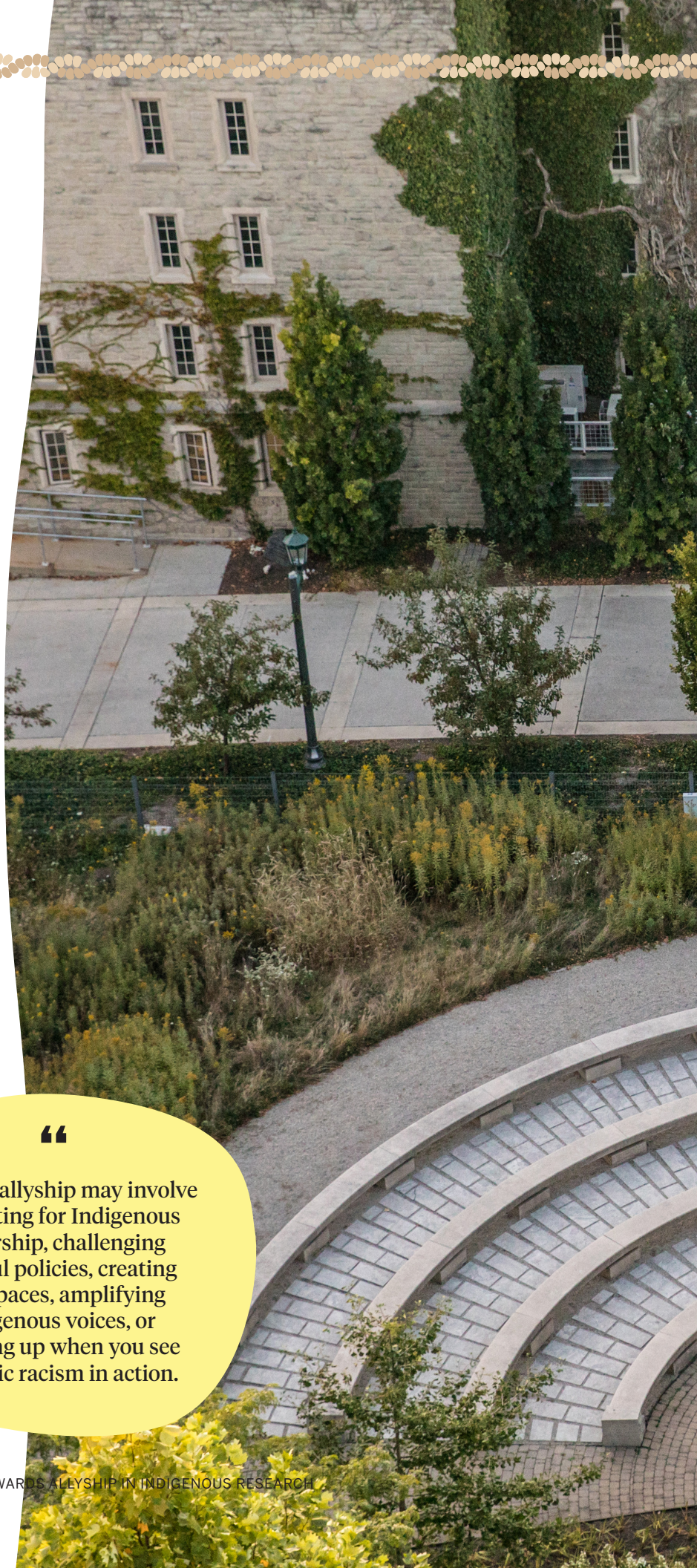
## HOW CAN I PROMOTE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION AT WESTERN?

[12 Ways to Engage in Truth and Reconciliation at Western](#)

contains a small list of resources and actions one can engage in and use to promote Truth and Reconciliation work at Western (Indigenous Learning Space, n.d.). Use this list to continue allyship work beyond your research.

“

Effective allyship may involve advocating for Indigenous leadership, challenging harmful policies, creating safe spaces, amplifying Indigenous voices, or speaking up when you see systemic racism in action.





## ASK YOURSELF:

When using your influence to drive structural change in support of Indigenous research, ask yourself

1. Do I understand how Western structures and systems may favor settler perspectives and perpetuate systemic racism against Indigenous Peoples (e.g., research funding priorities, ethical review processes, staff capacity, budget allocation, governance, policies, etc.)?
2. What am I doing to actively dismantle these structures and systems?
  - Am I complicit in supporting these structures and systems because they are “just the way things are”?
  - Am I complicit in supporting these structures and systems because they benefit my research or career advancement?
  - Am I prepared for addressing institutional barriers that emerge during my project, and can I commit to ensuring I dismantle those barriers for collaborations in the future?
3. Am I willing to give up some of my power and privilege to support anti-racist, unsettling and decolonizing research practices that involve Indigenous Peoples?
4. How am I ensuring that Indigenous voices and perspectives are prioritized, included, and respected in the research environment?
  - How am I using my influence to create space for Indigenous voices and perspectives within the research process?
  - How am I addressing tokenism and promoting genuine engagement with Indigenous communities in research?
  - How am I ensuring that Indigenous methodologies and knowledge systems are respected and valued within the research process?
5. Have I advocated for adequate resources, such as funding or time, to support Indigenous-led components of this research?
6. Am I open to continuous learning and humility in accepting feedback from Indigenous partners, even if it means adjusting my research approach or personal beliefs?



# CONCLUSION





# CONCLUSION: WALKING TOGETHER IN THE RESEARCH JOURNEY

Engaging in Indigenous research is a deeply meaningful and ongoing journey; one that requires humility, reflection, and a commitment to continuous learning. At Western Research, we want to remind you that you are not walking this path alone. Support is available to help you navigate the complexities of this work with care and respect.

Mistakes are an expected part of this process. They are not signs of failure, but rather important opportunities to reflect, learn, and grow. Do not let fear of making mistakes become a reason to step away. Instead, let it deepen your understanding and strengthen your commitment to ethical, respectful, and community-centered research.

Successful Indigenous research calls for thoughtful preparation, honest self-reflection about where you are in your learning journey, the building of meaningful and reciprocal relationships, and long-term engagement. Western Research is committed to guiding you through this process, providing resources and expertise necessary to ensure your work contributes positively – without placing undue burden on Indigenous faculty, staff, or communities.

Together, we can support research that is not only rigorous but also responsible, relational, and rooted in respect.



# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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- **Allyship:** an ongoing process of learning, unlearning, and action. It involves recognizing and challenging systems of power and privilege that marginalize Indigenous Peoples and other equity-deserving groups. For non-Indigenous people, allyship means understanding the impacts of settler-colonialism and reflecting on one's role in upholding or dismantling systemic inequality. It also includes "calling in" others with compassion to promote awareness and respectful behavior (Native Women's Association of Canada, n.d.).
- **Burnout:** is a work-related condition that results in feeling low energy and cynical about one's occupation and can sometimes negatively impact one's professional performance (WHO, 2019).
- **Community-based Research:** Community-based research (CBR) is a collaborative and participatory approach in which the community helps shape the research focus and is actively involved throughout the entire process—from developing the proposal and collecting data to analyzing results and applying the findings. This approach centers community knowledge, addresses local priorities, and aims to create meaningful, action-oriented outcomes that benefit the community directly (Arctic Institute of Community-Based Research, n.d.).
- **Community-led Research:** a research approach driven by the priorities, knowledge, and leadership of community members. In this model, communities identify research needs, shape the research process, conduct the research, and retain ownership of the data, with researchers supporting rather than directing the work (University of Saskatchewan, Social Innovation Lab, 2024).
- **Discrimination:** refers to "the unjust or prejudicial treatment of individuals or groups based on characteristics such as race, ethnicity, age, sex, or ability" (American Psychological Association, 2024, para. 1). In the context of Indigenous Peoples, discrimination includes both individual acts and systemic policies or practices that disadvantage Indigenous individuals or communities without valid justification—contributing to ongoing social, economic, and health inequities (Canadian Human Rights Commission, 2025).
- **Elders:** highly respected individuals who are often, but not always, senior citizens of a community who have and continue to demonstrate an admirable balance of their wisdom, harmony, and actions within their daily lives. Elders are recognized and designated by the community. They are frequently considered to be Knowledge Keepers of Indigenous history, traditional teachings, Ceremonies, and healing practices.
- **Emotional Labour:** refers to the process of "controlling one's emotions to meet the expectations of a role or job" (Psychology Today, 2025, para. 1), often by suppressing genuine feelings and displaying emotions deemed appropriate in professional or social settings (Psychology Today, 2025).
- **Entitlement:** A mindset or behavior in research where Indigenous communities are approached with the assumption that they will, or should, support, participate in, or approve of a project. This includes disregarding or minimizing their right to decline involvement, reacting negatively to refusals, or expecting justification for their decisions. Entitlement reflects a lack of respect for Indigenous sovereignty, autonomy, and self-determination, and undermines ethical, reciprocal engagement in research.

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- 🕒 **Extractive Research:** A research approach where investigations are conducted on, about, or for communities, but are primarily driven by the researchers' own professional interests, goals, or perceptions of community needs and benefits—rather than in collaboration with or under the direction of those communities themselves. This model often overlooks the voices, priorities, and agency of the people being studied, and may result in outcomes that serve external stakeholders more than the communities involved.
- 🕒 **In A Good Way (Good Heart / Way or Mino-Bimaadiziwin):** striving to live in accordance with mino-bimaadiziwin, an Anishinabemowin (Anishinaabe language) expression that means living in accordance with the [Teachings](#) to enjoy a good life, with good intentions and actions (Rheault, 1999).
- 🕒 **Indigenous Data Sovereignty:** the right of “Indigenous Peoples, communities, and Nations to manage, oversee, and control data created by or concerning them. The concept of sovereignty highlights that Indigenous Nations are self-governing, which includes authority over their data and knowledge. This principle acknowledges Indigenous Peoples as the ultimate decision-makers regarding their data and knowledge, shifting their role in research from being mere subjects or participants to becoming meaningful partners and co-researchers” (University of Toronto Libraries, 2024, para. 1).
- 🕒 **Indigenous Research:** “research in any field or discipline that is conducted by, grounded in, or engaged with First Nations, Inuit, Métis, or other Indigenous Nations, communities, societies, or individuals; as well as their wisdom, cultures, experiences, or knowledge systems, in both historical and contemporary forms, past and present. Indigenous research can embrace the intellectual, physical, emotional, and/or spiritual dimensions of knowledge in creative and interconnected relationships with people, places, and the natural environment” (SSHRC, 2025).
- 🕒 **Positionality:** refers to the social and political context that shapes a person's identity, values, and perspectives, including aspects such as race, gender, class, ability, and Indigeneity (Queen's University, 2025). It recognizes that these intersecting factors influence how individuals experience the world and engage in research or teaching. A positionality statement is a reflective tool that acknowledges how one's identity and lived experiences inform their approach to knowledge, power, and relationships in academic and community settings (Queen's University, 2025).
- 🕒 **Protocols:** the “guidelines, manners, etiquettes, and rules that are in place to keep Indigenous ways of being, belonging, doing and knowing at the forefront” (Calgary Board of Education, 2022, p. 4). Protocols vary by community; however, some examples include offering tobacco when making a request, providing an honorarium or a gift as a thank you, and offering smudging at meetings, events, or engagements (Calgary Board of Education, 2022).
- 🕒 **Racism:** is “an ideology that either explicitly or implicitly asserts that one racialized group is inherently superior to others. Racist ideology can be openly manifested in racial slurs, jokes or hate crimes. However, it can be more deeply rooted in attitudes, values, and stereotypical beliefs” (OHRC, 2009, p. 12). Anti-Indigenous racism is racism against Indigenous Peoples specifically.
- 🕒 **Reflexivity:** is the practice of critically examining how a researcher's own social positioning, assumptions, and biases shape the research process. It involves ongoing self-awareness and reflection to ensure that personal perspectives are acknowledged and addressed in the design, interpretation, and communication of research (Jamieson, Govaart, & Pownall, 2023).
- 🕒 **Relational Accountability:** is a “situationally and contextually determined [...] form of paying attention to respect, reciprocity, and responsibility in our relationships” (Fraser, 2022, pp 2-3), which extend to all of Creation.

⑤ **Settler:** individuals whose ancestors came to this land willingly to access resources, regardless of how long their family has lived in Canada. Settlers benefit from the colonial structures and systems that dispossess Indigenous peoples of their lands, rights, and cultures. Importantly, being a settler is not inherently a condemnation, but a starting point for reflection, responsibility, and transformation.

⑤ **Settler Fragility:** A defensive reaction exhibited by non-Indigenous researchers—often settlers—when Indigenous communities refuse participation, request changes to a project, or raise concerns about the research approach. Rather than engaging in self-reflection or adapting to better align with community priorities, settler fragility manifests in behaviors such as centering the researcher’s feelings, minimizing community input, or deflecting from the broader context of colonial harms and extractive research histories. This response can hinder meaningful, respectful, and community-led research relationships.

⑤ **Speed of Trust:** refers to the principle of building relationships, partnerships, or communities at a pace that respects the time required to establish genuine trust. Rather than rushing processes or outcomes, this approach emphasizes patience and mutual understanding. It emphasizes moving forward only as fast as relationships allow (Pfortmüller, 2022).

⑤ **Tokenism:** refers to the superficial or symbolic effort to include individuals from underrepresented or marginalized groups, without addressing systemic issues or ensuring meaningful participation. It often involves selecting one or a few individuals to represent an entire group, which can reinforce stereotypes and further marginalize those individuals (CultureAlly, 2023).

⑤ **Turtle Island:** is a term used by many Indigenous Peoples across North America to refer to North America, based on origin stories and the shape of the continent. Using this term is one way to recognize Indigenous sovereignty and challenge colonial borders.

⑤ **Unlearn/ing:** a process described as “stripping away the beliefs and ways to act/behavior/live that have been imposed by our upbringing, by our education, by the society we live in. It means challenging everything we’ve come to know as the ‘way things are supposed to be’ and ‘embracing the way things are’” (Plata, 2020, para. 3).

⑤ **Unsettle/ing:** in an Indigenous context, unsettling refers to the process of disrupting dominant colonial narratives, assumptions, and power structures. It challenges settler comfort and compels critical reflection on one’s positionality, complicity, and responsibility in systems of ongoing settler colonialism (Regan, 2010). Unsettling is not about creating guilt, but about fostering awareness, accountability, and a shift toward decolonial thinking and action.





“  
Allyship involves recognizing and challenging systems of power and privilege that marginalize Indigenous Peoples and other equity-deserving groups.

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# APPENDIX: SELF-REFLECTION TOOL

This self-reflection tool provides a series of reflection questions to support researchers, faculty, staff, trainees, and students in orienting themselves to conduct Indigenous research as allies.

*These questions are adapted from the [Guide Towards Indigenous Allyship at Western University](#).*

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

### 01 **Learn and unlearn by educating ourselves**

Before engaging an Indigenous person with a request for knowledge, ask yourself:

1. Can I find this knowledge myself through existing resources?
2. Is this knowledge the person holds?
  - Is it relevant to their Indigenous identity and/or Nation/community?
  - Does it reflect their area of expertise/study/research?
3. Am I providing this person with enough time to reflect and engage?
  - Consider asking what timelines would be reasonable from their perspective, or whether there are upcoming commitments that may impact their capacity. When unsure, it's respectful to build in extra time and remain flexible to accommodate their schedule and process.
4. Is this request going to involve emotional labour, and if so, how can I support this person?
5. Is this a safe space and time to ask?
  - Consider whether trust has been established, whether the setting allows for open and respectful dialogue, and whether the person has the time, capacity, and support to engage meaningfully. If in doubt, you can ask if they feel comfortable having the conversation now or would prefer to revisit it later.
6. How will I provide appropriate compensation to acknowledge this work?



## 02 Unsettle ourselves through continual self-reflection

Before engaging in research with and for Indigenous people or communities, ask yourself:

1. What benefits and privileges do I have and/or my ancestors have received while residing in Canada? How does this impact my experience as an individual in this space?
2. On whose Traditional Territory am I living, working, and/or learning on? On whose Traditional Territory am I intending to conduct research?
  - How have I and might I benefit from living on and performing research on this land?
3. What are the [Treaties](#) of the land I am on?
  - What do they say?
  - What are my Treaty responsibilities? Not only to Indigenous Peoples, but to the land, water, animal, and plant life?
4. What is my motivation and intention in taking on this research?
  - What drives my interest in this topic, and how does it align with the needs or priorities of the community?
  - How will I stay accountable to myself throughout the process?
  - How will I benefit from this research—and more importantly, does this research offer meaningful and tangible benefits to the community involved?
5. What are my values and beliefs about research, including community-led research?
  - How are these similar or different from Indigenous values and beliefs about research?
6. Where do my values and beliefs come from?
  - How have they benefitted me by allowing me to maintain my power and privilege as a non-Indigenous person?
  - How are they harmful to Indigenous Peoples?
  - What can I do to learn, unlearn, and grow?



## 03 **Engage in community-led research (& respect the right to refuse)**

When engaging in community-based and/or community-led research, ask yourself:

1. Have I completed the most relevant training (e.g., cultural safety, Indigenous data sovereignty, data management, OCAP® training, etc.)?
2. Do I have a strong positive relationship with this community?
  - Have I spent sufficient time building a relationship with this community, ensuring trust has been developed through multiple visits and meaningful cultural exchanges?
  - Have the community(ies) participated in research with me in the past?
3. How can I ensure that my research is relevant to (a priority for) and will benefit the community?
4. How am I following the community's research ethics, consent, and data sovereignty protocols?
  - Who decides on behalf of the community whether the community will participate in research? (e.g., Chief and Council, a community Research Ethics Board, or another mechanism)
  - How am I including community members in decision-making processes throughout the research?
  - What steps am I taking to advocate for my institution to uphold the community's rights throughout the research process?
  - If formal protocols are not in place, how am I working with the community to support the development of processes that facilitate, track, and document consent, data use, and access to community knowledge and resources?



5. How am I treating the community as an equal partner throughout the research process?
  - Do I understand the community's research priorities and needs? Does my research respond to them appropriately?
  - Have I created space for the community to share their expertise and insights in shaping the research questions and methodologies? How am I acknowledging this expertise?
  - Am I open to adjusting my research approach based on community input and feedback?
  - Am I prepared to let the community lead discussions around the timing, use, and dissemination of research results?
  - How will I ensure that the research findings are shared in a way that is accessible and beneficial to the community?
    - ◆ What provisions or resources have I secured to support community co-authorship or co-presentation of results at academic conferences, workshops, or other forums?
    - ◆ Have I discussed and respected the community's media communication protocols, including how findings may be shared publicly?
    - ◆ How will the community be involved in decisions about thesis or publication processes related to work conducted on their lands, waters, resources, and/or with their people? What agreements are in place to support this?
6. How am I fostering long-term, respectful relationships with the community beyond the scope of this research project?
  - Am I ready to commit to these relationships for decades (beyond the life of this research project?)
  - Have I approached this work with patience and humility, prepared to proceed at the speed of trust as determined by the community?



## 04 Advocate to drive structural change in support of Indigenous Research

When advocating to drive structural change in support of Indigenous research, ask yourself:

1. Do I understand how Western structures and systems may favour settler perspectives and perpetuate systemic racism against Indigenous Peoples (e.g., research funding priorities, ethical review processes, staff capacity, budget allocation, governance, policies, etc.)?
2. What am I doing to actively dismantle these structures and systems?
  - Am I complicit in supporting these structures and systems because they are “just the way things are”?
  - Am I complicit in supporting these structures and systems because they benefit my research or career advancement?
  - Am I prepared to address institutional barriers that emerge during my project, and am I making every effort to dismantle those barriers for collaborations in the future?
3. Am I willing to give up some of my power and privilege to support anti-racist, unsettling, and decolonizing research practices that support Indigenous Peoples?
4. How am I ensuring that Indigenous voices and perspectives are prioritized, included, and respected in the research environment?
  - How am I using my influence to create space for Indigenous voices and perspectives within the research process?
  - How am I addressing tokenism and promoting genuine engagement with Indigenous communities in research?
  - How am I ensuring that Indigenous methodologies and knowledge systems are respected and valued within the research process?
5. Have I advocated for adequate resources, such as funding or time, to support Indigenous-led components of this research?
  - Am I collaborating with the community to provide research training for community members if they wish?
6. Am I open to continuous learning and humility in accepting feedback from Indigenous partners, even if it means adjusting my research approach or personal beliefs?



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Reconciliation and equity are collective responsibilities, and all individuals have a role to play in challenging systemic inequities.



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# BRAIDING TRUTH INTO ACTION

A Guide Towards Indigenous  
Allyship at Western University

Office of Indigenous Initiatives

AUGUST 2025



Indigenous  
Initiatives



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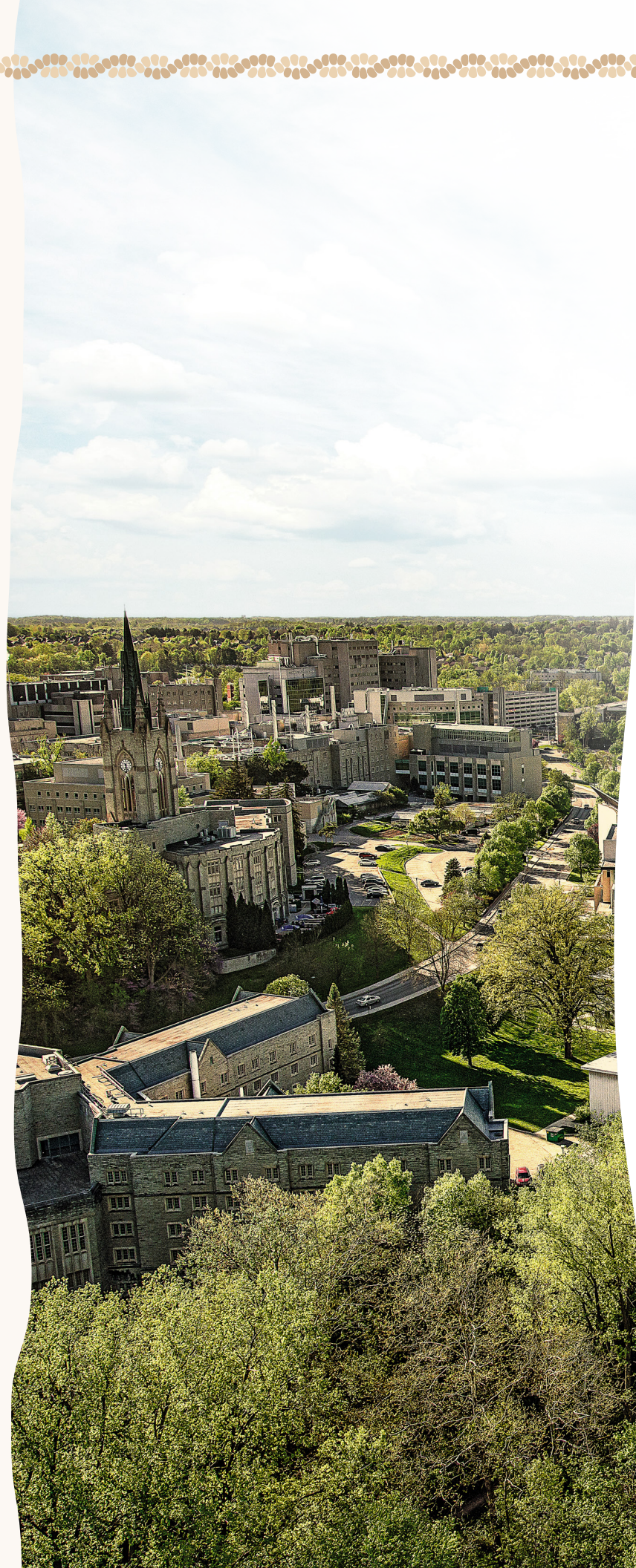
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# TERRITORY ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This document was created at Western University, located on the ancestral territories of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, and Lūnaapéewak Nations.

The lands The University of Western Ontario (Western) and City of London occupy, draw life and sustenance from Deshkan Ziibing (Antler River), part of a system of waterways that connects to Nayano-nibiimaang Gichigamiin (The Great Lakes) and all our relations within it. The City of London is tied to the London Township and Sombra Treaties of 1796, the Longwoods Treaty (1819) and the stewardship of the Great Lakes region is encoded by the Dish with One Spoon and Silver Chain Covenant between the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee. The Haudenosaunee Confederacy in this region also holds the Confederacy Hiawatha Wampum as well as the Two Row Wampum with the Dutch.

Western acknowledges in our strategic plan, [Towards Western at 150](#) (2020), that Reconciliation is a priority and is integral to the university's operations, and that there is much work to be done towards building relationships with Indigenous Nations, as well as building understanding of our roles and responsibilities within this mandate.

In our land acknowledgment, when we say, “we acknowledge the historical and ongoing injustices that Indigenous Peoples (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) endure in Canada,” we are generalizing the complex and nuanced reasons Indigenous Peoples face injustices. If we do not critically reflect on the explicit causes, such as dishonoured Treaty agreements and anti-Indigenous policies imposed by governments and institutions, we are glossing over the ways people can strengthen their Allyship by critically interrogating oppressive systems and structures. We envision that this guide is one way in which colleagues at Western can reflect on ways they can “accept responsibility as a public institution to contribute toward revealing and correcting miseducation as well as renewing respectful relationships with Indigenous Communities through our teaching, research and community service” (Office of Indigenous Initiatives, n.d.).

By acknowledging we are located on Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, and Lunaape lands connected to Indigenous-Crown Treaties made with the Deshkan Ziibing Anishinaabek (Chippewas of the Thames First Nation), and Indigenous Treaties such as the Dish with One Spoon, Western makes explicit our responsibilities to equity and justice for all Indigenous Peoples, Reconciliation, and our ongoing commitment to strengthen and build relationships.

## Executive Summary

The *Guide Towards Indigenous Allyship at Western University* is a living document that has been evolving since April 2022. It was developed to support the broader Western University community in building capacity for meaningful Reconciliation Initiatives and deepened collaboration with Indigenous faculty, staff, students, as well as local Indigenous organizations and Communities.

The Guide is rooted in the understanding that allyship is not a title or credential to be claimed, but an ongoing relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, one marked by humility, learning, and accountability. True allyship is not defined by public declarations or accolades, but by whether Indigenous communities themselves recognize your support as meaningful. You do not need to know whether you “are” an ally to begin this work—where you struggle or feel discomfort may offer important insight into how your allyship practices need further attention and care.

The Guide introduces *10 Principles for Indigenous Allyship*, each aligned with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s *Principles for Reconciliation* (TRC, 2015c, p. 16). Every principle includes brief readings, reflection prompts, and additional resources to support deep and sustained engagement. Readers are encouraged to take their time, sit with discomfort, and revisit sections over time. This is not a linear journey, but one that calls for ongoing reflection, return, and recommitment.

The *10 Principles for Indigenous Allyship* are presented in a structure based around three stages of Allyship development from *Towards Braiding* by Elwood Jimmy, Vanessa Andreotti, and Sharon Stein (2019):

### 01 SECTION 1: UNDERSTANDING

Readers begin by examining the historical and systemic harms experienced by Indigenous Peoples. The four principles in this section ask allies to confront difficult truths and explore how these legacies shape present-day realities.

### 02 SECTION 2: A COMMON LANGUAGE

This section supports allies in deepening their understanding of Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing. Readers are invited to notice how power and privilege operate, and how allyship can be practiced in ways that respect Indigenous sovereignty and leadership.

### 03 SECTION 3: COMMITMENT

The final section emphasizes sustained, principled action—even and especially when things get difficult. These principles guide readers in building long-term relationships of accountability and working toward systemic change.

Section 3 also includes a reflective conclusion that outlines common missteps on the allyship journey, offering guidance for staying grounded when the work feels overwhelming or uncertain.

This Guide was developed through collaboration between the Office of Indigenous Initiatives (OII), Sisco & Associates Consulting Services Inc. (SISCO), Indigenous community members, and many Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff, faculty, and students at Western. It is intended to be used in concert with *Western’s Guide to Allyship in Indigenous Research*. A shared glossary supports the use of both guides.



# ABOUT THE GUIDE

This Guide was co-authored through the collaborative efforts of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous contributors, and many other Western University faculty, staff, students, and community members. Special acknowledgment goes to Sara Mai Chitty for her significant contributions to this work. This Guide was also developed with support from [Sisco & Associates Consulting Services Inc.](#)

## Acknowledging our Contributors and Reviewers

Chi Miigwech, Wanishi, Yaw<sup>^</sup>ko (thank you) to the Indigenous and allied staff, faculty, students, and community who supported this important work through participating in online interviews, focus groups, and an online survey. Thank you to both the Office of Indigenous Initiatives (OII) and the Office of Faculty Relations. We would like to extend a special thanks to Dr. Christy R. Bressette, Vice-Provost / Associate Vice-President (Indigenous Initiatives), and Dr. Margaret McGlynn, Vice-Provost for Academic Planning, Policy & Faculty, for their vision to make this resource a reality.

### A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO ALL OUR REVIEWERS, INCLUDING:

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## About the Office of Indigenous Initiatives

Western's Office of Indigenous Initiatives and the Vice-Provost & Associate Vice-President (Indigenous Initiatives) lead system-wide change required to advance Truth and Reconciliation, achieve equitable outcomes for Indigenous Peoples, and implement Western's Indigenous Strategic Plan. The Office is committed to building and strengthening relationships with Indigenous Communities locally, provincially, nationally and internationally, and to fostering an academic environment where everyone experiences the university as a welcoming environment in which Indigenous languages and ways of knowing, being and doing are respected and supported.

### THE OFFICE'S PRIORITY AREAS ARE:

- Strategic planning and implementation
- Communications and reporting
- Community engagement
- Policy development and practice
- Space planning and management
- Curriculum and training development
- Student affairs, access and recruitment strategies
- Faculty and staff recruitment and retention strategies
- Research and scholarship strategies

### BACKGROUND TO THE CREATION OF THE GUIDE

This Guide has been a work in progress since April of 2022, when the Office of Indigenous Initiatives (OII) and the Office of Faculty Relations hired Sisco & Associates Consulting Services Inc. (SISCO) to prepare a guide on Indigenous Allyship to support non-Indigenous faculty, staff, students, and community members in respectful engagement with Indigenous faculty at Western. However, informed by a comprehensive environmental scan and literature review, together with results of a broad consultation process, it became apparent that the Guide should evolve to provide support for engaging with Indigenous students, staff, and community members, as well as faculty. To inform the Guide, Sisco conducted an environmental scan and engaged thirty-one (31) students, faculty, staff, and community members, including through:

- Interviews with Indigenous and non-Indigenous faculty (8) at Western,
- An online focus group with the Office of Indigenous Initiatives staff (10), and
- An online survey of Western faculty, staff, and students (13).

Further input on the guide was obtained directly from trusted allied non-Indigenous staff identified by the OII and Western Research. As a result, the current iteration of this guide draws on the personal experiences of the Indigenous staff, faculty and students at Western who were engaged. The themes that emerged correlated strongly with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) report Volume 6, *What Have We Learned: Principles for Reconciliation* (2015c, p.16). Through our review processes, in response to feedback from allied and Indigenous scholars, non-Indigenous and Indigenous staff at Western, the Guide has been revised by the OII into a living document grounded in ten principles towards Indigenous Allyship .

The recommendations offered herein have been made in good faith with a genuine interest in supporting Western University's stated desire and commitment to enhancing Indigenous Allyship at Western. The 10 Principles and Framework outlined in this Guide are non-exhaustive and are intended as a starting point in an ongoing learning journey that should be extended to include independent learning, engagement, and action.



### CONTACT INFORMATION

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## Purpose of this Guide: Building and Strengthening Relationships

This guide, although not exhaustive, is intended to support anyone at Western in building meaningful, reciprocal collaborations with Indigenous colleagues and community members through an Indigenous lens of relationality (See “*Building and Strengthening Relationships*” section below). Looking towards Allyship praxis as the foundation for Truth and Reconciliation and Decolonization work, consider this Guide’s Indigenous ten Allyship Principles as a tool for ongoing reflection, relationship- and capacity-building.

To move people towards action, the Indigenous Allyship Principles are embedded within a Decolonizing framework, with an overarching goal to support the broader Western community in two key areas:

### 1. Grow capacity for Reconciliation Initiatives and Deepen Collaboration with Indigenous Faculty, Staff and Students, as well as Local Indigenous Organizations and Communities.

This support will help ease the pressure that many Indigenous people experience at Western when they are approached inappropriately (e.g. being asked questions that are easily researchable) or over-engaged. While the work of Indigenization, Reconciliation and Decolonization in the academy needs to be Indigenous-led (‘nothing about us without us’), the support, collaboration, and contributions of allies towards equity and justice in the implementation of these processes are imperative.

### 2. Provide guidance in the work of Reconciliation at Western, and supporting Indigenous colleagues, through Allyship.

Not surprisingly, individuals have a broad range of understanding about our roles and collective responsibilities toward the work of Reconciliation and support of Indigenous initiatives at Western. Sometimes, the confusion about how and where to help, or the fear of making a mistake, can become obstacles to meaningful engagement in this work. This guide can support critical self-reflection as part of building equitable partnerships and collaborations. As we grow, build and strengthen relationships and understanding, the roles and responsibilities of allies will become clearer.

The Guide is a non-exhaustive resource and is intended to be a prerequisite document to other Allyship resources including the *Guide to Allyship in Indigenous Research* (2025).

## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE?

The Guide is written as a living document, moving allies through *10 Principles Towards Indigenous Allyship*. Corresponding Truth and Reconciliation Commission *Principles for Reconciliation* (TRC, 2015c, p. 16) are listed alongside these Allyship Principles. As mentioned above, we consider these Allyship Principles essential to Truth and Reconciliation and Decolonization work:

1. Accept Truth Before Jumping into Reconciliation
2. Cultivating Treaty and Indigenous Literacy
3. Committing to Unsettling and Creating New Pathways Together
4. Building Reciprocal Relationships in the Spirit and Intent of Treaties
5. Honouring Indigenous Sovereignty and Self-Determination in Decision-Making and Relationship-Building Processes
6. Using Power, Resources, and Privilege to Advocate for and Support Indigenous-Led Initiatives
7. Nurturing Culturally Inclusive and Trauma-Informed Learning Environments
8. Respecting Indigenous Community Leadership, Protocols, Processes, and Approaches
9. Supporting the Reclamation of Indigenous Knowledges, Systems, and Lands through Indigenous-Led Cultural Resurgence and Language Revitalization
10. Closing Gaps, Removing Barriers, Decolonizing, and Dismantling Oppressive Systemic Structures.

## Framework for this Guide

While explanations of other critical tools and frameworks such as 'ethical space' and 'Two-Eyed Seeing' are included in later sections, it is important to recognize that this Guide seeks to support people in creating space to work collaboratively across cultures, worldviews and understandings. Some pathways toward this type of collaboration have been conceptualized within an institutional context in *Towards Braiding* by Elwood Jimmy, Vanessa Andreotti, and Sharon Stein (2019). Their work provides a framework for this Guide (see Figure 1).

### 01 SECTION 1: UNDERSTANDING

In order to work collaboratively with Indigenous peoples "a deep understanding of historical and systemic harms and their snowball effects needs to become "common sense," and not something to be avoided, dismissed, or minimized out of fear of hopelessness, guilt, or shame" (p. 22).

### 02 SECTION 2: A COMMON LANGUAGE

This guide will help allies build a common "language that makes visible the generative and non-generative manifestations of bricks and threads needed to be developed, without becoming rigid, prescriptive or accusatory" (p. 22).

### 03 SECTION 3: COMMITMENT

In order to engage in decolonizing, Indigenizing and Reconciliation processes "a set of principled commitments toward the 'long haul' of this process needs to be in place, including a commitment to continue the work even/especially when things become difficult and uncomfortable" (p. 23).

Figure 1 – Adapted from Jimmy, Andreotti & Stein, 2019

#### NAVIGATE THIS GUIDE BY:

1. Completing or revisiting the short readings
2. Carefully responding to the provided prompts and reflection questions
3. Exploring suggested videos, readings, or other resources
4. Revisiting each section, as needed



Created for 'when things fall apart', *Towards Braiding* describes Indigenous paradigms as 'thread sensibilities' and Euro-Western paradigms as 'brick sensibilities.' Doing so helps to visualize where both paradigms, even when used through a Two-Eyed Seeing framework, do not fit together perfectly (Jimmy, Andreotti & Stein, 2019).

*Towards Braiding's* 'three long steps,' required before braiding can begin, are a useful framework for the Indigenous Allyship context at Western. These three long steps form the structure for this guide: Section 1) Understanding; Section 2) A Common Language; and, Section 3) Commitment (Jimmy, Andreotti & Stein, 2019). Through these three long steps, this guide walks allies and aspiring allies through the 10 principles that make up Indigenous Allyship at Western (see Figure 2).

Existing and aspiring allies using this guide are encouraged to move through each section, at their own pace, in four ways: by completing the short readings; by carefully responding to the provided prompts and reflection questions; by exploring suggested videos, readings, or other resources; and, by revisiting each section as needed. Each of the three sections asks you to reflect on the Indigenous Allyship Principles shared within it and consider how they work together to help you engage in Reconciliation and relationship-building. Prior to moving on to the next section, you are encouraged to explore the videos, readings, and reflection questions listed to help you deeply reflect on the Allyship Principles and understand how they support your decolonization journey. Many of the provided reflection questions may be difficult to answer, or you may feel as if there is no answer. The provided prompts are intended to be sat with, mulled over, and revisited as you move through the phases, with the understanding that your answers will likely evolve over time. If you are someone who likes to see progress, consider writing down your answers and revisiting them again to see how they've evolved.

#### TIPS FOR USING THIS GUIDE:

- Questions may come up – take note of them
- Read the entire section. Many definitions and information are included at the end of some sections, to support your learning within that phase
- If you do not know what a word or concept means, check the resource list to learn more
- Complete the "Transforming Power and White Privilege" (2022) module created by Western's Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) before you begin.

## A Note on “Heart-Work”

A part of the process of Decolonizing is connecting the heart and the mind. While navigating the Guide, some content may feel unclear, or cause you feelings of sadness, anger, frustration, guilt, or disbelief.

We encourage you to pause and to explore the provided resources to deepen your understanding and to help you move through these emotions. You can then pick this guide back up in a productive way.

# Principles for Indigenous Allyship



## TO SUPPORT THEIR USE OF THIS GUIDE, ALLIES ARE ENCOURAGED TO:

- Create communities of practice in their unit or office;
- Read the Truth and Reconciliation (2015a), MMIWG Reports (2019), *Calls to Action* (2015b), and *Calls for Justice* (2019);
- Engage with the supplementary resources as a group or individually, to learn about local Indigenous Communities;
- Critically reflect on their positionality, including privilege afforded to non-Indigenous people living on Turtle Island (which may include settler-colonial privilege), the benefits it affords, and how maintaining that privilege supports the continuance of colonialism;
- Work through unsettling processes;
- Build Treaty literacy to critically assess the Treaties and Wampums, and whether the commitments they represent have been upheld;
- Establish respectful relationships with Indigenous people and/or communities;
- Interrogate personal biases and commit to continued learning; and,
- Evaluate how they can continue their journey of Allyship in a good way



The longest journey we will ever make as human beings is the journey from the mind to the heart.

— Chief Darrell Bob, St’at’imc Nation, quoting Angaangaq Angakkorsuaq (Kalaalit Nunaat, Greenland) (Cultural Survival, 2017).

Figure 2 - Principles for Indigenous Allyship, Western University (2025)

## Who is this guide for?

This Guide is for anyone at Western and Affiliate Colleges who is, or plans on, collaborating and working with First Nations, Métis or Inuit staff, faculty and/or local First Nations communities. This includes those Western University and Affiliate College community members enacting Western's Indigenous Strategic Plan (2016), or Theme 2 of Western's institutional strategic plan, Towards Western at 150 (that of Advancing Reconciliation with Indigenous Communities; Western University, 2022). It is specifically created within the context of Allyship with First Nations Peoples of Turtle Island, in a way that contributes to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action (2015).

While this Guide emphasizes building meaningful relationships with Indigenous Peoples and communities in a broad sense, it is important to ground Allyship work in local First Nations context. Before engaging with this Guide, it is essential that readers understand how their own social identities and positionalities can impact their Allyship journey (See: "To Support Their Use of This Guide," above). This work will help aspiring allies understand that, while they may not have a direct relationship with Indigenous people and communities in their personal and professional lives, by virtue of living and working in London and surrounding area, on Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee and Lūnaapéewak lands, a relationship with Indigenous Peoples and communities already exists.

This relationship, however, does not have to remain mysterious. The release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Report in 2015 and the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (2019) have generated *Calls to Action* (2015b) and *Calls for Justice* (2019). These calls help Canadians understand the impacts of ongoing settler-colonization on Indigenous Peoples and encourage actions that will contribute to healing and generative paths forward for all. Former Senator Murray Sinclair, who passed away in 2024, said that in order to realize balanced Indigenous-settler relationships, the process of Reconciliation will take seven to ten generations of intentional healing and collaboration (Waddell, 2021).

This Guide is not intended to convince anyone to become an ally. While this Guide can serve as a resource for supporting people who are pursuing a journey towards Indigenous Allyship at Western, for many it might be a starting point. But Allyship is an ongoing commitment, and individuals should ensure they are doing the foundational work outlined in this guide to unlearn and learn prior to taking any concrete actions. While allies and aspiring allies of differing positionalities may use this Guide in a similar way, their actions, independent learning and critical self-reflection may look very different, depending on the individual's unique lived experience and their professional role at Western University.

“  
Reconciliation is a  
process of regeneration  
that will take many  
years to accomplish.

– Leanne Simpson  
(2011, p. 22)

### STARTING ONE'S JOURNEY TOWARD ALLYSHIP:

- Identifying Indigenous-created resources, especially those made freely available, that can support learning about local context and Communities;
- Attending Indigenous events or learning opportunities on campus, where invitations are extended to the Western community;
- Building an understanding of one's positionality and Treaty responsibilities; and,
- Making a commitment to unsettling, and finding ways to support learning and growing.

### IN LEVERAGING THIS GUIDE FOR LEARNING AND ACTION, ALLIES CAN:

- Develop an understanding of the need for Indigenous Allyship at Western;
- Reflect on relationality, relational accountability, reciprocity, responsibility, and respect within their work with Indigenous people and communities;
- Reflect on ways to action the *Calls to Action* (TRC, 2015b) and the *Calls for Justice* (MMIWG, 2019) in their professional and personal lives;
- Assess their positionality and identify the historical and contemporary impacts of their field/discipline(s) on Indigenous people;
- Build Indigenous solidarity;
- Engage in meaningful Reconciliation;
- Develop or strengthen their decolonial lens;
- Practice humility through the uncomfortable unsettling process;
- Learn about and apply locally relevant Treaties and Wampum covenants to Allyship practice;
- Recognize potential mistakes they may make; and,
- Understand what Allyship looks like, based on the guidance provided.

## Building and Strengthening Relationships, Relationality & Relational Accountability

Concepts of relationality differ among Indigenous cultures, but there are common threads of understanding of an interconnectedness, interrelatedness and relationality that extend beyond human-to-human relationships – such as ‘all my relations’ – which can be understood as “a way of acknowledging our interconnectedness as people, plants, animals, everyone and everything” (Winnipeg School Division, 2024). Encoded in these relationships are principles of respect, reciprocity and responsibility. At its heart, embodying Indigenous Allyship as an action emerges from this relationality – “the way in which something is done becomes very important because it carries with it all of the meaning. This meaning is derived from context including the depth of relationships with the spiritual world, elders, family, clans, and the natural world” (Simpson, 2011, p. 91).

There are many reports and frameworks that have been developed by Indigenous Nations, organizations and communities, the Canadian government, Indigenous scholars, institutions and allies, often through collaboration, to guide Reconciliation, Decolonization and Indigenization work. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) outlines 10 *Principles for Reconciliation* represented alongside the Principles for Indigenous Allyship that are threaded within a framework towards decolonizing, below (TRC, 2015c). Overarchingly, this guide is grounded in TRC Principle #6, though every single principle is crucial in this process:



“  
All Canadians, as Treaty peoples, share responsibility for establishing and maintaining mutually respectful relationships.

– TRC, 2015c, p. 4

**THE MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN, GIRLS AND 2SPIRIT INQUIRY'S REPORT (MMIWG, 2019) OFFERS 231 CALLS FOR JUSTICE, INCLUDING CALLS FOR JUSTICE FOR ALL CANADIANS THAT SHARE SIMILAR SENTIMENTS AROUND RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING:**

15.7 – Create time and space for relationships based on respect as human beings, supporting and embracing differences with kindness, love, and respect. Learn about Indigenous principles of relationship specific to those Nations or communities in your local area and work and put them into practice in all of your relationships with Indigenous Peoples. (MMIWG, 2019b, p. 199)



# SECTION ONE: UNDERSTANDING



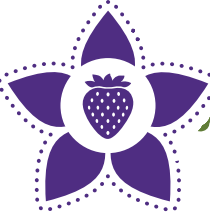


# SECTION ONE: UNDERSTANDING

This guide has been divided into three sections, following the three long steps articulated by Jimmy, Andreotti, and Stein (2019). These sections are anticipated places where aspiring allies will learn, step away from, and then revisit the different Allyship Principles outlined within that section.

Section 1 focuses on fostering a deep understanding of historical, ongoing, systemic harms that is an essential foundation for Allyship work (Andreotti et al., 2019). The resources listed in this section support allies and aspiring allies in acquiring essential background knowledge.

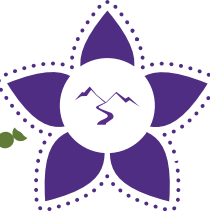
**THIS SECTION INCLUDES THE FIRST THREE ALLYSHIP PRINCIPLES, ENCOURAGING READERS TO:**



Accept truth before jumping into reconciliation



Cultivate treaty and Indigenous literacy



Commit to unsettling, and creating new pathways forward together



“Truth comes before reconciliation

– Atlohsa Family Healing Services

**CORRESPONDING TRC PRINCIPLE #3:**

“Reconciliation is a process of healing relationships that requires public Truth sharing, apology, and commemoration that acknowledge and redress past harms.”

– TRC, 2015c, p. 3



**ALLYSHIP PRINCIPLE**

## Accepting Truth Before Jumping into Reconciliation

Many people are still learning and familiarizing themselves with the historical and ongoing legacies of colonization in Canada, despite the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s report on Indian Residential Schools in 2015.

Universities, as public and government-funded institutions, are deeply entrenched within colonial constructs and policies, creating institutional and systemic gaps and barriers for Indigenous (and many other) people (Stein, 2018). Research is emerging to demonstrate how Western University, through its affiliation with Huron University, is connected to Indian Residential Schools and colonial legacies (Cross & Peace, 2021). Many Western community members are intergenerational Indian Day and Residential School survivors, and/or experience the impacts and fallout from genocide and ongoing settler-colonial policy in a diversity of ways. Acknowledging this ongoing colonial violence, and the oppression that shapes the realities of Indigenous colleagues, their families, friends and communities, is crucial before we can engage in true collaboration (Jimmy et al., 2018).

Critical self-reflection enables potential allies to make space for unpacking and understanding how settler-colonialism has come to be. This pre-work relieves the Indigenous people they are working with from retelling traumatic experiences and explaining why this context is important, and often allows you to ‘jump right in.’

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR ACCEPTING TRUTH BEFORE JUMPING INTO RECONCILIATION:

Use the resources listed below to support your understanding of this principle:

- Western University’s [Guide for Working with Indigenous Students](#)
- Western University’s [Indigenous Teaching & Learning Series: Module 1 - Decolonize the Academy](#)
- First Nations University of Manitoba’s [4 Seasons of Reconciliation](#) (subscription required; Western community members can request access through the Office of Indigenous Initiatives)
- N’Vision’s [The Path](#) (subscription required; Western community members can request access through the [Office of Indigenous Initiatives](#))
- University of Alberta’s [Indigenous Canada: A Massive Open Online Course](#).
- Western University’s School of Advanced Studies in the Arts and Humanities (SASAH)’s [N’Satung Film Project](#)
- University of Toronto OISE’s Understanding Indigenous Perspectives module: [What is Reconciliation?](#)
- [Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Final Report](#)
- Stolen (Season 2) podcast: [Surviving St. Michaels](#)
- [National Inquiry into the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, Two-Spirit+ Final Report](#)
- Western University’s [Engaging with the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation at Western Toolkit](#)

### INDIGENOUS ALLYSHIP PRINCIPLE: REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What does ‘accepting the Truth’ in this context look like for me? What is resonating? What is challenging me?
- How do I understand settler-colonialism, in Canada, or otherwise? How has it impacted me? What are the implications?
- Have I taken the time to learn about local Indian Residential Schools and the ongoing and historical impacts of Indian Act policies and colonization on Indigenous Peoples who also live where I live, and beyond? Why or why not?
- Have I relied on Indigenous colleagues to educate me on these topics? How can I increase my own knowledge and understanding?
- How do I understand Reconciliation in Canada?
- What might my roles and responsibilities be, or not be, in Reconciliation? Why or why not?
- Are my intentions self-serving, or do they come from a desire to build a just future for all?
- What biases or stereotypes do I hold about Indigenous people? What can I do to critically examine them?
- What intersections and connections can I draw between the oppression I’ve experienced myself, or my family has experienced? How can I build solidarity across these connections? How can I build solidarity without having shared experiences?

## Local Context: Settler-Colonialism & Reconciliation at Western University

Western's founding college, Huron University College, was initially established as a school for Anglican Clergy aiming to, "raise up a succession of Clergy Indigenous to the soil, men of the country to do the work of the country," (Cross & Peace, 2021, p. 24). It was named after the Huron (Wendat) Nation, even though the Wendat had been driven out of this territory by that time, and there were existing relationships between the church and the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee –including evangelical visits to surrounding First Nations to generate interest and donations to the establishment of the university. This appropriation of names is seen as an early move toward the replacement of Indigenous influence, histories, and power with those of Christianity (Cross & Peace, 2021).

Western's founder, Bishop Hellmuth, visited Bkejwanong First Nation (also known as Walpole Island First Nation) in 1881 to confirm two Indigenous congregates in the church, where he left with a \$50 donation from the community towards the new school. A missionary named Keshegowene (John Jacobs) reported on Hellmuth's visit to them and wrote: "'When the Western University is opened,' the bishop told the congregation, 'Indians from different parts will continue to avail themselves of the grand privileges of obtaining a University education'" (*Dominion Churchman, 1881*, p. 367). Keshegowene noted in his coverage that these words had generated significant interest in the congregation (Cross & Peace, 2021).

While Bishop Hellmuth's intention may have seemed noble, the introduction of the Indian Act in 1876 created significant barriers for Indigenous people to attend post-secondary school. To do so, they had to enfranchise and give up their 'Indian Status,' a practice that did not end until 1951 (Joseph, 2018). "As Hellmuth's 1881 visit to Walpole Island illustrates, Indigenous Peoples played an important role in shaping his vision for the university and [...] tied the university directly to the same ecclesiastic and financial networks that underpinned and supported the beginning of the Anglican Church's involvement in the residential school system" (Cross & Peace, 2021, p. 23). Within ten years of the establishment of Huron College, a graduate of the College "opened the Shingwauk Industrial Home in Bawaating (Sault Ste. Marie)" (Cross & Peace, 2021, p. 24), where Indigenous children would be assimilated through industrial training. Eventually Western was established through the foundation of Huron College, and the Shingwauk Home was "re-labeled a residential school" (Cross & Peace, 2021, p.25). This relationship illustrates how settler education and colonial education were developed and used, in conjunction, as tools for Indigenous dislocation and assimilation (Cross & Peace, 2021).

More details and clarification about Western's settler colonial history can be found through reading the full article: "'My Own Old English Friends': Networking Anglican Settler-Colonialism at the Shingwauk Home, Huron College, and Western University" by Natalie Cross and Thomas Peace (2021).

“  
Settler colonialism is different from other forms of colonialism in that settlers come with the intention of making a new home on the land, a homemaking that insists on settler sovereignty over all things in their new domain.

– Tuck & Wang, 2012, p. 5



## ALLYSHIP PRINCIPLE

### Cultivating Treaty and Indigenous Literacy

Beyond learning about the impacts of ongoing and historical settler-colonialism on Indigenous Peoples, it is essential to learn and unlearn with and from Indigenous Peoples and communities about their local histories, languages, governance, Treaties, and cultures, in order to cultivate cross-cultural literacy.

In the University of Manitoba's *Working in Good Ways Framework Guide* (2021) they identify Indigenous literacy as "a framework through which we can understand what we see, hear, and feel while in community, and repeated engagement will give us the sense of trust and belonging that allows us to repair any missteps that we may make" (University of Manitoba, 2021, p. 23). They identify a lack of Indigenous literacy in this context as the root of hesitation and fear people may have around engaging with Indigenous people and communities.

Indigenous Nations are not monolithic, and collaborating effectively with groups and organizations requires familiarity with their diverse customs, priorities, realities, and/or governance. Indigenous students are more likely to succeed in post-secondary education when they have access to culturally relevant curriculum and supports (Brunette-Debassige & Richmond, 2018, Cameron et al., 2024). Similarly, Indigenous faculty, and by extension Indigenous staff, "do not leave their identities as Indigenous persons at the door of the university" (OCAV/RGAE Joint Working Group, 2020). It is important to seek out existing resources, like this one, that have been developed by or in collaboration with local Indigenous Peoples, as they are experts on their own cultures and histories.

Additionally, when working with local Elders, community members, and colleagues, it is respectful to learn who they are and the Nations they are from, because not everyone is necessarily from the same community, or speaks the same language (e.g., pan-Indianism, or amalgamating diverse Indigenous cultural practices together as if they are one). For example, there are three Indigenous languages spoken in the area surrounding Western University – Lunaape, Ojibwe and Oneida – and we have many students from across Turtle Island who speak different Indigenous languages and dialects attending the university.

Treaties, meanwhile, are nation-to-nation relationships between Indigenous Peoples and the Crown, managed by the federal government (Government of Canada, 2024). Without Indigenous-Crown and Indigenous Wampum Treaties, Canada could not have formed Confederation (Borrows, 1997). As a foundation for this nation-to-nation relationship, these Treaties affirm Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination. Reviewing Treaty history, and how Canada broke Treaty agreements, supports deeper understanding of the systemic efforts that persist to this day, to displace Indigenous Nations and extinguish title to land. Deepening cultural literacy on the relationships between land, language, governance and Indigenous Nations, also enhances your ability to advocate for and honour Treaties and restore and revitalize land in collaboration with Indigenous people. Taking the time to learn about the Indigenous Peoples with whom you are seeking to engage and build meaningful relationships can help to support a positive relationship building experience.

#### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR CULTIVATING TREATY AND INDIGENOUS LITERACY:

Use the resources listed below to support your understanding of this principle:

- Rachel Chong (2022) [Indigenous Information Literacy](#)
- Western University's [More than Words: Guide to Land Acknowledgments at Western](#)
- Western University's [Indigenous Teaching & Learning Series](#)
- Western University's [Connecting for Climate Change Action](#) (Online course)
- Western's Office of Indigenous Initiatives Treaties Recognition Week 2020 Speakers Series
  - [Episode 1](#)
  - [Episode 2](#)
  - [Episode 3](#)
- Ontario Institute for Studies on Education (OISE)'s – Online Modules
  - [We Are All Treaty People](#)
  - [A Short History of Indigenous Education](#)
  - [Indigenous Ways of Knowing](#)
  - [Indigenous Worldviews](#)
  - [Power and Representation: Stereotypes](#)
  - [What is reconciliation?](#)
- Yellowhead Institute's
  - [Land Back Report & Online Course](#)
  - [Cash Back Report](#)
- [Indigenous Students, Indigeneity & Experience in Universities](#)
- Assembly of First Nations' [Treaties & Why They're Important](#)
- Assembly of First Nations' [What is cultural competency?](#)
- Centennial College's [Our Stories: First Peoples in Canada](#)
- Kory Wilson and Colleen Hodgson's [Pulling Together: Foundations Guide](#)

#### INDIGENOUS ALLYSHIP PRINCIPLE 2: REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- On whose land do I live, work and play?
- Am I a settler? As a settler, am I a Treaty person?
- How do I understand responsibilities as a Treaty person?
- How do I understand my personal and collective relationship to Indigenous lands and Peoples on an ongoing basis?
- What is my relationship to the land?
- How do I understand Indigenous Peoples' relationships to land? Are there tension points?
- What is 'Land Back'? How do I understand it? How does it make me feel? How do I move through discomfort?
- What is Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination?
- What more do I still need to learn about Treaties, Indigenous cultures, histories and Peoples? What do I want to learn more about?

“We may feel worried about saying something offensive or doing the wrong thing, and this may prevent us from developing meaningful relationships or engaging with Indigenous communities at all.”

– Ferland et al 2021, p. 23

#### TRC PRINCIPLE #10:

“Reconciliation requires sustained public education and dialogue, including youth engagement, about the history and legacy of residential schools, Treaties, and Indigenous rights, as well as the historical and contemporary contributions of Indigenous peoples to Canadian society.”

– TRC, 2015c, p. 4



## Colonization is an ongoing process

While Reconciliation has become an access point for correcting historical and contemporary injustices against Indigenous Peoples, it is not the same as decolonization. Reconciliation is an institutional commitment to actioning the TRC's *Calls to Action* (2015b) and restoring relationships with Indigenous people, while decolonization involves "the dismantling of colonial power structures, be they political, epistemic, or social, with the ultimate goal of" (Wakeham n.d.) "repatriati[ng] ... Indigenous land and life" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 1).

This is best understood by reading Tuck and Wang's *Decolonization is Not a Metaphor* (2012) in its entirety, but here is an excerpt below:

“

*Within settler colonialism, the most important concern is land/water/air/subterranean earth (land, for shorthand, in this article.) Land is what is most valuable, contested, required. This is both because the settlers make Indigenous land their new home and source of capital, and also because the disruption of Indigenous relationships to land represents a profound epistemic, ontological, cosmological violence. This violence is not temporally contained in the arrival of the settler but is reasserted each day of occupation. This is why Patrick Wolfe (1999) emphasizes that settler colonialism is a structure and not an event. In the process of settler colonialism, land is remade into property and human relationships to land are restricted to the relationship of the owner to his property. Epistemological, ontological, and cosmological relationships to land are interred, indeed made pre-modern and backward. Made savage [...] For the settlers, Indigenous peoples are in the way and, in the destruction of Indigenous peoples, Indigenous communities, and over time and through law and policy, Indigenous peoples' claims to land under settler regimes, land is recast as property and as a resource. Indigenous peoples must be erased, must be made into ghosts.”*

– Tuck and Ree, forthcoming, p. 56

“

**In order for the settlers to make a place their home, they must destroy and disappear the Indigenous peoples that live there.**

– Tuck & Wang, 2012, p. 6

Sisco and Associates' survey of Western faculty and staff, conducted in preparation of this Guide, highlights some of the ways ongoing settler-colonialism manifests within university structures, systems, and interpersonal interactions, and connects with evidence shared in Western's Indigenous Curriculum & Learning Subcommittee's Report Maamwi Gizekewag (2022) as well as the *Lighting the Fire: Experiences of Indigenous Faculty in Ontario Universities Report* (2020).

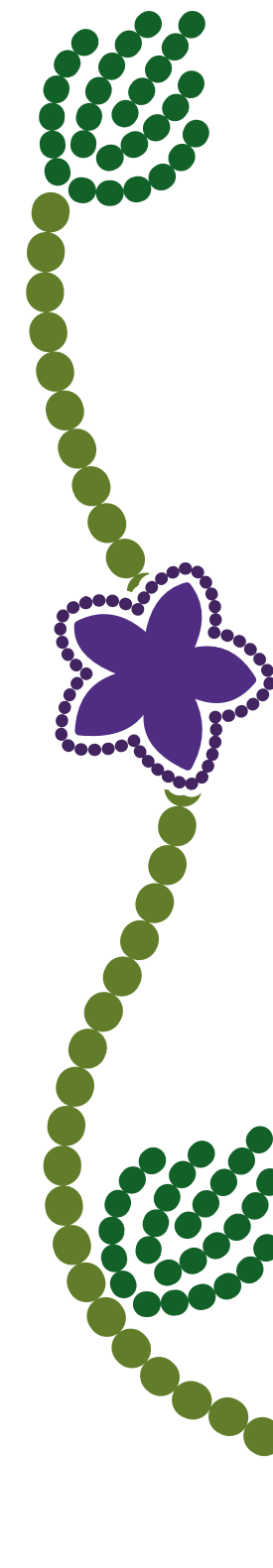
### TOGETHER, THESE REPORTS IDENTIFY THAT MODERN-DAY COLONIALISM CAN LOOK LIKE THE FOLLOWING:

- Limited Indigenous literacy of staff, faculty and students at Western
- Placing the responsibility of Reconciliation, Indigenization and decolonization solely on Indigenous people employed at Western
- Anti-Indigenous racism (individual, institutional and internalized) and microaggressions
- Erasure and marginalization of Indigenous epistemologies and perspectives within curriculum and pedagogies across disciplines and professional programs
- Need for a critical mass of Indigenous faculty, leadership & staff to inform these processes
  - Tokenism of the Indigenous staff, faculty and students that are at the institution and beyond
- Extractive engagement with Indigenous community members, staff and faculty
- Chronic underfunding of Indigenous programs and initiatives
  - Consideration for funding for Reconciliation and Indigenous Initiatives is not built into the budget planning and allocation process at the department/unit level; considered an afterthought or not "core" budget
- Culturally unsafe practices and environments
- "Performative or public-relations campaigns that make statements and promises without deep commitments embedded in university-wide strategic plans, faculty strategic plans, and budget processes" (Maamwi Gizekewag, 2022)
- Conflation of Indigenization with Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) as well as internationalization
- Limited progress on answering TRC *Calls to Action* (2015) or MMIWG's *Calls to Justice* (2019)
- Absence of meaningful treaty-based consultation with Indigenous partners and First Nations, especially around educational sovereignty, climate change policies, land management and stewardship

For many people, imagining their place of work, or their own complicities in these systems of oppression, can evoke feelings of anger, guilt, shame and denial. Often the burden to 'prove' the need for policies and practices to affect change, systematically remove barriers to equity, justice, and engage in Reconciliation at the academy, falls on Indigenous staff, faculty and students requiring significant amounts of emotional labour (Brunette-Debassige, 2024).

The Gesturing Towards Decolonial Futures Collective offers a summary of the four kinds of denial that allow colonial logics to persist, that require critical self-reflection:

1. "The denial of systemic violence and complicity in harm (the fact that our comforts, securities and enjoyments are subsidized by expropriation and exploitation somewhere else);
2. "The denial of the limits of the planet (the fact that the planet cannot sustain exponential growth and consumption);
3. "The denial of entanglement (our insistence in seeing ourselves as separate from each other and the land, rather than 'entangled' within a living wider metabolism that is bio-intelligent), and
4. "Denial of the depth and magnitude of the problems that we face: the tendencies 1) to search for 'hope' in simplistic solutions that make us feel and look good; 2) to turn away from difficult and painful work (e.g. to focus on a 'better future' as a way to escape a reality that is perceived as unbearable)." (Gesturing Towards Decolonial Futures Collective, n.d.)





## ALLYSHIP PRINCIPLE

### Committing to Unsettling and Creating New Pathways Forward, Together

Undergoing the process to ‘unsettle yourself’ has been described as “a way to be able to capture and talk about what we’re experiencing in Canada and the things you can do to support reconciliation in your community for the benefit of current and future generations” (Yaghujaanas & Geiss, 2022, para. 1).

It is about learning (Allyship Principle 2), recognizing the harms done (Allyship Principle 1), and then committing to action. Individuals can “apologize for those harms, help support healing, make ethical actions to change the beliefs of your family, community, organization, and take part in events that are designed to combat racial injustice” (Yaghujaanas & Geiss, 2022, para. 18).

Making a commitment to unsettle biases, norms, and conventions by continually unlearning (discarding ideas that are racist and inaccurate), learning, reflecting and connecting (with Indigenous Peoples and Communities) is foundational and ongoing for an ally. The use of decolonial frameworks to critically analyze systems, processes, and structures that create social inequity and injustice, must be accompanied by working with Indigenous people to disrupt and rebuild towards justice and Reconciliation –or we risk replicating harm. Unsettling and decolonizing are lifelong learning processes wherein mistakes will be inevitable. Grounding actions in justice, equity, Reconciliation, and reparations encourages us to develop new relationships oriented towards collective healing.

Since Reconciliation, Indigenization, and decolonization are novel processes to many people working at Canadian universities, many interventions have never been considered and actioned before. When sentiments such as “... that’s just how it is...” and “...you’ll have to work around it...” are presented as the only options, it creates more labour for the Indigenous people who must now create solutions to work around structural barriers, which are often impossible feats without administrative and leadership support (Brunette-Debassige, 2024). Examining and changing policies or procedures so the next person doesn’t have to figure out their own “workaround” creates the systemic change we aspire towards in Allyship Principle #3. Committing to the lifelong work of unsettling and decolonizing is some of the “heavy lifting” that allies can do to support Indigenous colleagues.

“We have described for you a mountain; we have shown you the path to the top. We call upon you to do the climbing.”

– Senator Murray Sinclair

#### TRC PRINCIPLE #4:

“Reconciliation requires constructive action on addressing the ongoing legacies of colonialism that have had destructive impacts on Indigenous peoples’ education, cultures and languages, health, child welfare, the administration of justice, and economic opportunities and prosperity.”

– TRC, 2015c, p. 3

“...an unsettling pedagogy is therefore based on the premise that settlers cannot just theorize about decolonizing and liberatory struggle: we must experience it, beginning with ourselves as individuals, and then as morally and ethically responsible socio-political actors in Canadian society”

– Regan, 2010, pp. 23- 24

“Decolonizing benefits everyone, not only Indigenous people. It creates space to hear all voices.”

– Dr. Christy R. Bressette

#### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR COMMITTING TO UNSETTLING:

Use the resources listed below to support your understanding of this principle:

- Paulette Regan’s [Unsettling the Settler Within](#)
- Ontario Institute for Studies on Education (OISE)’s Online Module - [Power & Representation: Stereotyping](#)
- Confederation College’s [Diversity, Equity & Indigenous Lens](#)
- Western University’s EDID Anti-Oppression Certificate Program
  - [Anti-Indigenous Racism Module](#)
  - [Historical Review of Racism in Canada](#)
  - [Bias & Microaggressions: Impact, Prevention and Intervention](#)
- Stryker Calvez’s [Indigenizing Academia](#) (University of Saskatchewan)
- Canadian Geographic’s [Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada: Racism](#)
- Canadian Race Relation’s [Anti-Indigenous Racism in the Education System](#) Module Series (video)
- Wilfred Laurier University’s [Indigenous Allyship: An Overview](#)
  - See pg. 13 “[Oppression & Privilege](#)”
- Assembly of First Nation’s: [Impacts of Contact: Meaning of Culture](#)
- Susan Manitowabi’s [Historical & Contemporary Realities: Movement Towards Reconciliation](#)

#### INDIGENOUS ALLYSHIP PRINCIPLE 3: REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What is my positionality?
- What is my family’s history? How did I or my ancestors arrive here? What is my relationship to the settler-state? How does that impact how I navigate Euro-Western systems and structures?
- What intersections and connections can I draw between the oppression I’ve experienced myself, or my family has experienced? How can I build solidarity across these connections?
- What biases or stereotypes do I hold about Indigenous people? What can I do to critically examine them?
- Are you able to summarize the concepts of unsettling, and anti-racist lenses or pedagogies you learned in this section?
- Where do I see opportunity to unsettle?
- Where do I see opportunity to be anti-racist?
- How do you usually respond to having your assumptions challenged? (Jimmy, Andreotti & Stein, 2019)
- What does decolonization look like in my life? In my field/discipline?
- What decolonial or unsettling approaches can I start to implement right away? What approaches need time and consideration before implementation?

## A Note on “Performative Allyship”

In this Guide, performative Allyship refers to instances in which non-Indigenous people claim to be supporting Indigenous People through actions that are often self-serving and unhelpful or even harmful to Indigenous Communities. Examples include:

- asking an Indigenous person to provide an opening at a meeting without engaging the broader Indigenous Community for input;
- providing a scripted land acknowledgement without understanding and taking action to fulfill Treaty obligations; or,
- doing work to support the Indigenous Community with the expectation of receiving praise or a reward (Phillips, 2020; Roberts, n.d.).

Individuals may be practicing performative Allyship for different reasons, but it often stems from self-interest or feelings of guilt associated with privilege and colonial history, which can manifest in “a sort of ‘saviour complex’ whereby acting out Allyship becomes a way to rid oneself of guilt” (Francois, 2018). Tuck and Yang (2012) refer to this as “settler moves to innocence” (p. 10), whereby settlers undertake performative Allyship to alleviate settler guilt and complicity and ensure their privilege is maintained. An example of this is when allies feel an overwhelming obligation to say or do something often in response to awareness-raising events.

### INDIGENOUS ALLYSHIP SHOULD NOT BE MOTIVATED BY:

- Self-serving interests (e.g., to look good on a resume)
- Funding requirements or opportunities
- Guilt or shame, or to “clear” your conscience
- A desire to “save” Indigenous people

### INDIGENOUS ALLYSHIP SHOULD BE MOTIVATED BY:

- Curiosity and desire for reciprocal intercultural collaboration
- A genuine desire for equity and justice for all peoples
- An understanding that everything and everyone is interconnected - including the recognition that all oppression is systemic and interconnected
- Solidarity with oppressed peoples, whether you share their struggles or not

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS TO SAFEGUARD AGAINST PERFORMATIVE ALLYSHIP

- What compelled you to pick up this guide? What is motivating your learning?
- What does Indigenous Allyship mean to you? What does it look like, sound like, or feel like to you?
- How do you currently embody Allyship in your practice? How do you understand the intersections and/or interconnections between Allyship with Indigenous Peoples and other marginalized peoples (including from your own experience, where applicable)?
- Where do you feel you are at in your own learning/unlearning journey in supporting Indigenous Peoples’ rights, implementing UNDRIP (United Nations, 2007), and the TRC Calls to Action (2015b)?
- In this current moment, what is your Indigenous literacy level?
- Do you know what Indigenous-Crown Treaties and Wampum Treaties are?
- Do you understand the impact of major policies and institutions such as Residential Day Schools, the Sixties and Millennium Scoop, and the Indian Act on Indigenous Peoples?
- What does Indigenous solidarity mean to you?
- Do you see opportunities for you to actively play a role in building Reconciliation?
- Are there responsibilities you feel compelled towards in relation to Indigenous-Crown Treaties and Indigenous solidarity?



## SECTION ONE: FINAL REFLECTION

- 01 How did this section make you feel?
- 02 What do people or groups need in order to work together respectfully and responsibly? How does this work happen when these groups have difficult or painful histories between them?
- 03 How can you move through any feelings of discomfort, guilt, shame, outrage and/or denial?
- 04 What ideas caused discomfort for you? What ideas resonated?
- 05 What have you inherited, and where have you benefitted, from ongoing colonial systems? What parts of your identity or comfort rely on these systems?
- 06 How might collaboration help us image and create a better and wise futures



## SECTION TWO: A COMMON LANGUAGE



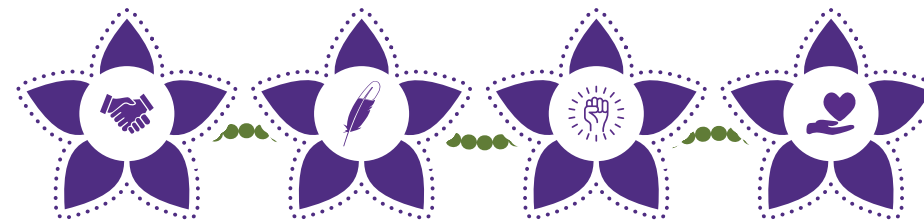


## SECTION TWO: A COMMON LANGUAGE

This guide has been divided into three sections, following the three long steps articulated by Jimmy, Andreotti, and Stein (2019). These sections are anticipated places where aspiring allies will learn, step away from, and then revisit the different principles outlined within that section.

Section 2 focuses on new learning, where aspiring allies come to deeply engage with Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing, with the goal of building a “common language that makes visible the generative and non-generative manifestations of bricks and threads needed to be developed, without becoming rigid, prescriptive or accusatory” (Jimmy, Andreotti, & Stein, 2019).

**SECTION 2 ASKS ALLIES AND ASPIRING ALLIES TO ENGAGE WITH THE NEXT FOUR ALLYSHIP PRINCIPLES, THOSE OF:**



Building reciprocal relationships in the spirit and intent of Treaties

Honouring Indigenous Sovereignty and self-determination in decision-making and relationship-building processes

Using power, resources and privilege to advocate for and support Indigenous-led initiatives

Nurturing culturally inclusive and trauma-informed learning environments



## ALLYSHIP PRINCIPLE

# Building Reciprocal Relationships in the Spirit and Intent of Treaties

Relationality is a core tenet in the cultures of many Indigenous Nations in this territory. Visiting, engaging with, and listening to Indigenous people and communities is a relational process that takes time and is intentional. The more you spend time with Indigenous people, you will come understand your own roles and responsibilities in moving towards Reconciliation. Consider ways to build reciprocity into these relationships. Just like Treaties, reciprocity is not embodied as a direct exchange of lands, services, or goods. Reciprocity is a recognition of the value of collaboration through equity and centering mutual benefits – while also ensuring that the net benefits of non-Indigenous partners are not gained at the expense of the well-being of Indigenous communities and lands and vice versa. This may include leveraging power and privilege to create space for Indigenous frameworks and approaches, or re-allocating resources (see Indigenous Allyship Principle #6). Beyond financial compensation, which is important for valuing time, Gifting and Reciprocity are important Indigenous practices to learn about and honour (Simpson 2014).

Strong cultural literacy and relationships are critical when designing programs, resources, or services for Indigenous people and ideally, these programs, resources and services are designed and led by Indigenous people. Engaging and consulting with Indigenous people and communities ensures relevancy to the needs and desires of those communities. These kinds of collaborations should be initiated with the support of relevant Indigenous people on campus – but can take time. Sometimes desired timelines, the available of people being ready to help, or grant deadlines, do not always line up with the capacity of the First Nations, Indigenous organizations, or Indigenous colleagues you hope to collaborate with. You may need to set the project aside or hold off on applying to funding to respect the capacity of the colleagues who would support this work. Sometimes this might also look like consultation with those colleagues on whether hiring someone external to the university to initiate or complete the project.

Relationship building and asking questions can be helpful in determining how one can engage with Indigenous Peoples in a good way. This relationship building should be approached in a manner that aligns with the expressed goals and aspirations articulated by the Indigenous person or Peoples. In seeking out continued learning opportunities, it is important to learn from the Indigenous Communities, Nations, and organizations with which you are, or hope to be, working. Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers bring knowledge that has been gained over a lifetime, which should be recognized as expertise. Indigenous Peoples are not under any obligation to offer their values or wisdom to help others learn, especially without any compensation. If they are faced with additional burdens of work or are not being engaged in a reciprocal way, they may be less inclined to become involved.

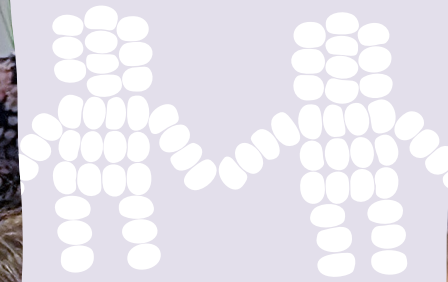
### INDIGENOUS ALLYSHIP PRINCIPLE: REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- How do I typically engage Indigenous people in my work?
- How do I understand reciprocity? What are Indigenous understandings of reciprocity? Where do these understandings overlap, or not line up?
- How can I maintain relationships after projects or initiatives have come to a close?
- How can I protect the time and energy of Indigenous colleagues who are frequently engaged?
- Consider the following questions from Jimmy, Andreotti and Stein's *Towards Braiding*:
  - “Do you recognize that it may be only through long-term engagement and relationship building that difficult and uncomfortable, but meaningful and important conversations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people might become possible?”
  - Do you intend to develop such a long-term engagement, or are you more interested in a one-off transactional relationship?” (2019, p. 48).



“  
**Relationality is a concept, practice, and way of being that maintains deep, reciprocal relationships to place and to each other.**  
 – Smith, 2021

**TRC PRINCIPLE #6:**  
 “All Canadians, as Treaty peoples, share responsibility for establishing and maintaining mutually respectful relationships.”  
 – TRC, 2015c, p. 4



### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR BUILDING RECIPROCAL RELATIONSHIPS IN THE SPIRIT AND INTENT OF TREATIES:

Use the resources listed below to support your understanding of this principle:

- Western University's [Guideline for Working with Indigenous Community Members](#)
- Western University's [Guideline for Working with Indigenous Students](#)
- Elwood Jimmy, Vanessa Andreotti and Sharon Stein's [Towards Braiding](#)
- Assembly of First Nation's Learning Modules: [Engaging the Community](#)
- University of Manitoba's [Working in Good Ways Toolkit](#)
- Rauna Kuokkanen's [Reshaping the University](#)
- Leanne Simpson's [Dancing on Our Turtle's Back](#); Ch 6
- Concordia University's [Dewemaagannag/My Relations](#)

# GUIDING OUR RELATIONSHIPS

## Wampum Belts

Wampum Belts are a mnemonic and storytelling device that pre-date Euro-Western settler colonialism and were used to represent many things, among them Treaty agreements. Wampum serves as reminders of the relationships, promises, and responsibilities to which each party commits. Indigenous Peoples recognize that all living beings are sovereign and there is a need for shared commitments among all parties, including all of Creation. Wampum belts were also used to record stories, histories, laws, and traditions (Assembly of First Nations, n.d.; Chitty, n.d.). There are two Wampum that are particularly relevant to this area and the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee and Lunaape, including the Dish with One Spoon and Two Row.

### DISH WITH ONE SPOON WAMPUM

The Dish with One Spoon (or Gdoo Naaginaa) is a pre-contact Treaty that is utilized to govern overlapping harvesting and hunting rights, established between Indigenous Nations in the Great Lakes region since at least 1142 AD (Mann & Fields, 1997). It was famously invoked in 1701 between the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee Confederacies during the Great Peace of Montreal.

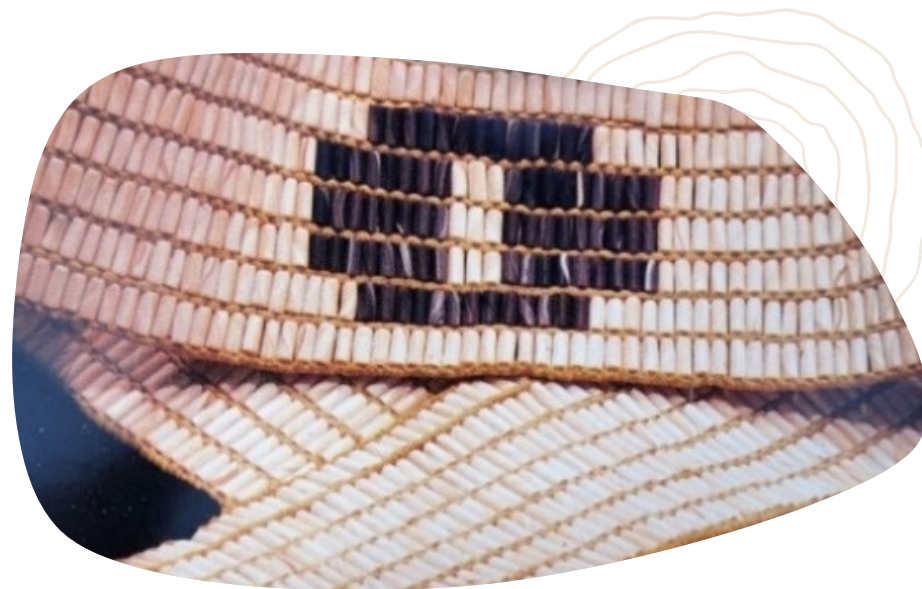


Figure 3 – Dish with One Spoon Wampum

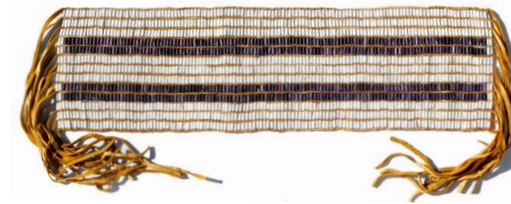


Figure 4 - Kaswentha (Two Row Wampum). Photo by Darren Bonaparte, 2000.

In this context, the Wampum describes the sharing of the land known as 'beaver hunting grounds,' which includes Southwestern Ontario as represented by the bowl in the middle of the belt (See Figure 1). This also acknowledges the finite resources of the territory, while invoking shared principles around taking only what you need.

The spoon laying across the centre serves as a reminder that we must take only what we need, and with equity and reciprocity in mind. By encoding this relationship in the Dish with One Spoon Wampum, all parties agree to share equally with one another, and care for the territory so that the resources will remain for future generations (AFN, n.d.; Chitty, n.d.).

### TWO ROW WAMPUM

The Two Row Wampum (or Kaswentha) is foundational to today's Indigenous-Crown relationships, and is a Treaty made between the Dutch settlers and Haudenosaunee (Six Nations) in 1613. This Wampum was meant to govern the spirit and intent of the relationship between the Indigenous Nations and settlers (or non-Indigenous peoples) in Turtle Island forever (AFN, n.d.; Borrows, 1997). The white beads in the belt symbolize the "peace, friendship and respect" (Sinclair, 2013, p. 126) as well as "equality...dignity and a sharing of the river we travel on" (Sinclair, 2013, p. 126). The two purple rows symbolize two vessels travelling down the river (of life), one a birch bark canoe in which First Nations Peoples travel, and the other a ship in which the Europeans travel, each with their own values, customs, and laws. (Borrows, 1997.)

### THE TWO ROW TEACHES US THAT INDIGENOUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS PEOPLES SHALL:

- be equals (described as brothers, in contrast to the paternalistic relationship imposed by the crown).
- remain distinct (in their own vessels) and self-determined, without interference over one another's lifestyles and affairs; and
- co-exist harmoniously, and interdependently.

While Haudenosaunee in origin, the Two Row Wampum is seen as the foundation for all relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Nations, as it holds the principles of working together in a good way. "Kaswentha emphasizes the distinct identity of the two peoples and a mutual engagement to coexist in peace without interference in the affairs of the other" (Vowel, 2018, p. 245). However, it is clear that there is more work to be done before this Wampum is realized.

“The Two Row Belt [...] depicts the Kaswentha relationship in visual form via a long beaded belt of white wampum with two parallel lines of purple wampum along its length – the lines symbolizing a separate-but-equal relationship between two entities based on mutual benefit and mutual respect for each party's inherent freedom of movement – neither side may attempt to “steer” the vessel of the other as it travels along its own, self-determined path.

– Vowel, 2018, p. 17

## 4Rs Approach: Guide for Working with Indigenous Students

Instead of demanding that Indigenous students assimilate into dominant university culture, the 4R's framework shifts responsibility onto institutions and their representatives to learn about Indigenous Peoples and to reflect upon and dismantle ethnocentric bias. University communities must develop relationships with Indigenous peoples and better understand how processes of colonialism and dominant Euro-Western norms are embedded in Canada's educational system.

"Dr. Michelle Pidgeon (2016, 2008) has tailored the 4Rs Framework in a way that privileges Indigenous ways of being and knowing. This framework recognizes the holistic and interconnected nature of Indigenous knowledge systems and Indigenous learners" (Brunette-Debassige & Richmond, 2018, p. 3).



Figure 5 - Guide for Working with Indigenous Students (Pidgeon, 2008)

### FROM THE GUIDE FOR WORKING WITH INDIGENOUS STUDENTS:

RESPECT	RELEVANCE	RECIPROCITY	RESPONSIBILITY
For perspectives that Indigenous students bring into the learning environment, for Indigenous thought and scholarship in academic discourses, and for Indigenous ways of knowing as valid in the academy.	Means that Indigenous students' interests and diverse learning needs are considered in the development and delivery of university curriculum, policies, practices, programs, and services.	Involves establishing mutually beneficial relationships between local Indigenous Peoples and the university and between and among faculty, staff, and Indigenous students.	Entails taking critical and meaningful action at personal and institutional levels that contributes to removing systemic barriers and to engaging all students and communities in the long-term processes of reconciliation.

(Brunette-Debassige & Richmond, 2018, p. 3)

### TWO-EYED SEEING & ETHICAL SPACE

Meaningful collaborations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people can also benefit from being grounded in an ethical space and Two-Eyed Seeing framework, as demonstrated by Figure 6.

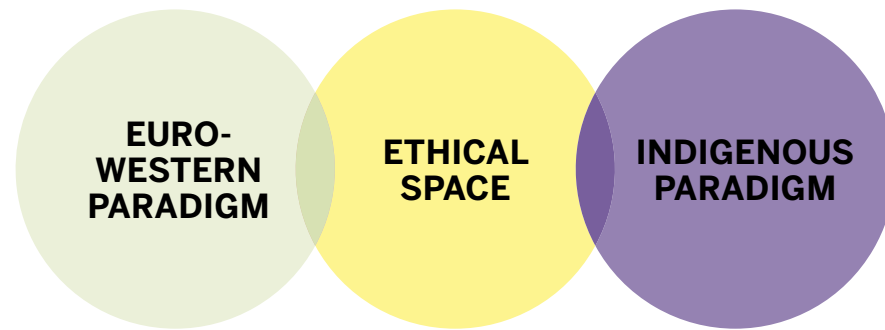


Figure 6 – Ethical Space. Adapted from Ermine, 2007.

Two-Eyed Seeing, or Etuaptmumk is a popular Indigenous research methodology in science, shared by Mikmaw Elder Albert Marshall, that has been adapted by many Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars and educators from diverse disciplines engaging in collaborative work. Two-Eyed Seeing "refers to learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing, and from the other eye with the strengths of Western knowledges and ways of knowing, and to using both these eyes together, for the benefit of all" (Bartlett, Marshall & Marshall, 2012, p. 335). A Two-Eyed Seeing framework recognizes Indigenous epistemologies as contemporary, evolving, distinct and whole, equal to Euro-Western epistemologies, and requires nuance and context to determine when to weave back and forth between diverse knowledges (Bartlett, Marshall & Marshall, 2012). At its core, Two-Eyed Seeing is about relationality –the focus of this Allyship Principle –or the relationships between diverse worldviews and the act of creating space for the power imbalance that colonial paradigms impose on Indigenous Peoples' knowledges to be dismantled.

Creating space for a Two-Eyed Seeing approach involves interrogating the ways that colonial paradigms assert that Euro-Western epistemologies and ontologies take precedence over Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies, on Indigenous lands. Developing the nuance and depth of understanding required to weave between Indigenous and Euro-Western contexts and paradigms can benefit from drawing on another framework, Willie Ermine's conceptualization of Roger Poole's ethical space (2007). Ermine writes that "a schism still exists in understanding between Indigenous Peoples and Western society [...] although more complex than presented here, the historical dimension of these relations can be envisioned as a repeating pattern of connect and disconnect, of engagement and disengagement, of union and rupture" (2007, p. 196). Ermine asserts that the impacts of colonization on Indigenous-Settler relationships are incredibly complex, and our knowledges are so "entangled and enmeshed [...] we continue stumbling about trying to create clarity of the transcultural issues that confront us without any thought given to what the rules of engagement might be between these two human communities" (Ermine, 2007, p. 197). Intentionally navigating these 'rules of engagement' within ethical space can equip Indigenous and non-Indigenous people with a common language (Andreotti et al., 2019) to explore where the paradigms align, and where tensions emerge.

### PAUSE AND REFLECT:

- In your work with Indigenous colleagues and/or communities, have you encountered Wampum, Two-Eyed Seeing, Ethical Space or Towards Braiding lenses and frameworks?
- What is your understanding of the lenses and frameworks? Do you need to deepen your understanding?
- How do these frameworks enhance your understanding of previous Allyship Principles, especially those presented in Section 1?
- How will you navigate your relationships with these frameworks in mind? How can you apply these frameworks more intentionally, going forward?





## ALLYSHIP PRINCIPLE

### TRC PRINCIPLE #1:

The United Nations' "Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples" provides the framework for Reconciliation at all levels and across all sectors of Canadian society.

– TRC, 2015c, p. 3

## Honouring Indigenous Sovereignty and Self-determination in Decision-Making and Relationship-Building Processes

The TRC Reconciliation Principles instructs governments and institutions to invoke the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People* or UNDRIP (United Nations, 2007), as "the framework for Reconciliation at all levels and across all sectors of Canadian society" (TRC, 2015a, p. 21). UNDRIP and the many other recommendations and reports, including the *Calls to Action* and *Calls for Justice*, emphasize the importance of honouring the sovereignty and self-determination of Indigenous Nations (United Nations, 2007).

Activating this principle requires consideration around the ways in which solutions and ideas are generated. Often, people are eager to help and have an idea or solution, but the solutions and ideas should be generated through collaboration with Indigenous Peoples and Communities – this is self-determination. Indigenous people are not idle or passive in building and shaping their communities, and often there is a plethora of work already done that has created a strong foundation for the work that you are about to do. Drawing on past initiatives, and experiences of those engaged creates unique opportunities to drive ideas and solutions towards new directions with the support of people who have led the work in the past. In some cases, Indigenous groups, organizations or Communities or Nations, might have already begun work on an initiative or solution, and it becomes frustrating for Indigenous people already engaged in the work when another group starts a similar initiative that draws on the same grants, resources and people. Scarcity mindsets risk situations of lateral violence. At the same time, it is important to recognize that reinventing wheels can contribute to over-engagement, burnout, and disengagement by Indigenous collaborators, and create unnecessary tensions between community members.

In instances where non-Community members, or people new to the work, present ideas and solutions that are already underway or have been tried, it can come across as condescending at best, and ignorant at worst. Ways to circumvent this is to follow the Allyship Principles outlined in this guide: build relationships first, conduct informal and formal environmental scans in partnership, and work with the Indigenous Peoples impacted by the issue for which you are trying to create solutions. It is often more generative to find out what work is already being done and how you can contribute.



### CONSIDERATIONS AROUND INDIGENOUS SOVEREIGNTY AT THE UNIVERSITY MIGHT INCLUDE:

- Educational sovereignty
- Data sovereignty
- Governance
- Cultural sovereignty
- Land stewardship

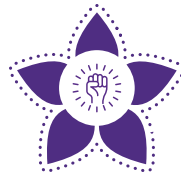
### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR HONOURING INDIGENOUS SOVEREIGNTY AND SELF-DETERMINATION IN DECISION-MAKING & RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING PROCESSES:

Use the resources listed below to support your understanding of this principle:

- [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples \(UNDRIP\)](#)
- Sharon Stein and Jan Hare's [The Challenges of Interrupting Climate Colonialism in Higher Ed](#)
- Global Indigenous Data Alliance's [CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance](#)
- University of British Columbia Library's [Indigitization Toolkit: Managing Digital Information](#)
- [The Native Governance Center](#)
- Chiefs of Ontario [Understanding First Nations Sovereignty](#)
- Assembly of First Nation's [Promoting the Enforcement of International Standards to Protect the Human Rights of First Nations People in Canada](#)
- Yellowhead Institute's [Indigenous First Sovereignty in Ontario](#)
- Charlotte Cote for National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health's [Indigenous Food Sovereignty](#) (video)
- Melissa Oskineegish and Leisa Desmoulins's [A Vision Towards Indigenous Education Sovereignty in Northwestern Ontario](#)
- Vanessa Anthony-Stevens's [Cultivating Alliances: Reflections on the Roles of Non-Indigenous Collaborators in Indigenous Educational Sovereignty](#)
- National Indian Brotherhood/ Assembly of First Nations' [Indian Control of Indian Education](#) (policy paper)
- Tahu Kukutai and John Taylor's [Indigenous Data Sovereignty: Toward an Agenda](#)

### INDIGENOUS ALLYSHIP PRINCIPLE: REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What is my familiarity with the United Nations' Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)? How does it inform my work?
- How do our policies align with UNDRIP? What opportunities exist to increase alignment?
- What do I understand about Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination? What assumptions might I be making?
- What is Indigenous data sovereignty? Indigenous educational sovereignty? Indigenous food sovereignty? Indigenous knowledge sovereignty? If you do not know, how will you find out?
- Where on campus, in the community, municipality, province, or nationally, do I see examples of Indigenous sovereignty/self-determination being exercised?
- How can I strengthen my support/advocacy of Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination on campus and in the broader community?
- When proposing solutions for issues faced by Indigenous people or communities, am I considering who asked for ideas or support? How have I consulted Indigenous people and communities? How will Indigenous people lead this project?
- Am I comfortable with my ideas or solutions taking new forms as I engage with Indigenous people?
- Am I willing to listen and adapt my thinking to ensure I am prioritizing Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination in decision-making processes?
- What existing projects are Indigenous people leading and creating in my unit/faculty/department/institution, that I can support on campus and/or beyond?
- Before I start a project, have I investigated what work is already being done, and who is already engaged, so I do not cause over-engagement?
- What are some ways that I can share space and resources for Indigenous Peoples to come together to collaborate with each other?



## ALLYSHIP PRINCIPLE

### Using Power, Resources and Privilege to Advocate for and Support Indigenous-Led Initiatives

According to your positionality (intersecting social identities and resulting proximity to power and privilege), this principle will look different for everyone. Allies stand behind, and advocate for, Indigenous-led initiatives by listening and amplifying Indigenous Peoples' needs and concerns.

You can respect and support Indigenous leadership by waiting until you are invited to ask questions and making sure that you are not interrupting conversations, teachings, and activities —especially ceremonies. Creating space for, speaking up, and advocating for Indigenous leadership is especially important when Indigenous Peoples have been excluded, included in a tokenistic way (or as an afterthought), ignored, or undermined. Even when projects and initiatives have Indigenous leadership and oversight, often tensions can emerge when the expectations of the Indigenous and non-Indigenous people involved do not necessarily align, or the leadership is tokenistic, and the power dynamic is not equal.

In *Towards Braiding* (2019), Vanessa Andreotti and Elwood Jimmy explain that “the cycle of relationship fractures is a pattern that is systemic in nature. This means that the problem is not an individualized problem but rather is rooted in historical and colonial structural patterns that are normalized (perceived to be natural) and rewarded in society” (p. 55). This resource offers some guidance for ‘when things fall apart,’ such as thinking through ways to shift how we relate to one another in settler-colonial institutional structures and hierarchies. Sometimes, relationships or projects fall apart because the accountabilities embedded in the outcomes prioritize the needs of institutions over the needs of the Indigenous people with whom we are collaborating. Utilizing power and privilege, to ensure accountability for long-term processes such as Reconciliation, is also crucial to sustaining long-term relationships.

#### TRC PRINCIPLE #9:

Reconciliation requires political will, joint leadership, trust-building, accountability, and transparency, as well as a substantial investment of resources.

– TRC, 2015c, p. 4



#### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR USING POWER, RESOURCES AND PRIVILEGE TO ADVOCATE FOR AND SUPPORT INDIGENOUS-LED INITIATIVES:

Use the resources listed below to support your understanding of this principle:

- [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples \(UNDRIP\)](#)
- Sharon Stein and Jan Hare's [The Challenges of Interrupting Climate Colonialism in Higher Ed](#)
- Western University's Office of EDI Online Module [Transforming Power and White Privilege](#)
- [In Their Moccasins](#) (open online game and resource)
- Elwood Jimmy, Vanessa Andreotti, and Sharon Stein's [Towards Braiding](#)
- University of Manitoba's [Working in Good Ways Practitioner Workbook](#) (pp. 48-51)

#### INDIGENOUS ALLYSHIP PRINCIPLE: REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What is my sphere of influence?
- How does my positionality affect my sphere of influence?
- What is privilege? What relationships to power and privilege do I hold?
- What needs have I heard from Indigenous colleagues and/or community members that I can learn more about? How can I bring these needs forward to my team?
- How can I ensure I am advocating and amplifying, not speaking on behalf of?
- What biases or stereotypes do I hold about Indigenous people? What can I do to critically examine them?
- What does advocacy for and supporting Indigenous initiatives look like?
- What Indigenous initiatives are already occurring around me that I can support?

## What are my Roles and Responsibilities in Reconciliation, Decolonization and Indigenization?

Contributing to decolonization, Indigenization and Reconciliation at the university is a collaborative, interdisciplinary, iterative and critically self-reflexive process. It is important to note these terms should not be conflated, and it is through strengthening and building relationships that roles and responsibilities within these processes become clearer. There are many resources available to help aspiring allies understand the different approaches and initiatives that contribute to decolonization, Indigenization, and Reconciliation. If you are unsure what these distinctions are, return to resources outlined in Section 1 of this guide, including the Office of Indigenous Initiatives' [Key Terms sheet](#) or the *Indigenous Teaching and Learning* modules (2022) developed by Dr. Candace Brunette-Debassige. This guide will become more effective when you understand the distinctions and where the processes might overlap.

We often hear the message 'Reconciliation is everyone's responsibility,' but one's responsibilities towards Reconciliation depend on positionality. As the *Calls to Action* (2015) and *Calls for Justice* (2019) advocate, it is the responsibility of everyone who lives in Canada to learn the truth and not stand in the way of Reconciliation, justice or equity (TRC, 2015a; MMIWG, 2019). However, the 'work' of Reconciliation, decolonization and Indigenization looks different for everyone. The chart below (Table 1) is intended to help you begin to visualize where you might make an impact as an ally to Indigenous people at Western. As you review it, consider:

- Who is already doing this work and how can I support them?
- What Indigenization, Decolonization and Reconciliation work is already underway?

**WHAT IF THE ANSWER IS 'NO'?**

For those questions in Table 1 where you find it difficult to answer, or where your answer is 'no', consider revisiting earlier phases of this guide, particular the resources listed in Section 1. As noted throughout this guide, Allyship is a complex journey that does not easily map onto traditional academic work.

WHO	WHAT	RECONCILIATION	DECOLONIZATION	INDIGENIZATION
<b>Scholars</b>	Research	Is my research responding to <i>Calls to Action</i> or <i>Calls for Justice</i> ?	Does my research and/or methodologies reinforce colonial logics? Does my research data respect Indigenous data sovereignty?	Do I have strong community partnerships? Do I know how to center Indigenous community needs? If not, how can I utilize the <i>Western Research Allyship Guide</i> , <i>Guide for Working with Indigenous Students</i> , and <i>Guidelines for Working with Indigenous Community Members</i> in my scholarship?
<b>Educators</b>	Curriculum	How are we teaching about Reconciliation?	Do students have the opportunity to interrogate Euro-Western canon and disciplines using a decolonial lens?	Does program curriculum reflect Indigenous ways of knowing and being in ethical and respectful ways? Do we utilize <i>the Guide for Working with Indigenous Students</i> ?
	Pedagogy	How are we responding to relevant <i>Calls to Action</i> ?	How do we engage in decolonized pedagogies?	How do I respectfully and ethically engage Indigenous pedagogies? How do I build in flexibility in my courses to allow students to attend ceremony and important cultural events? If I do not, have I engaged with <a href="#">available Truth and Reconciliation</a> resources?

WHO	WHAT	RECONCILIATION	DECOLONIZATION	INDIGENIZATION
<b>Leadership</b>	Policy	How are we responding to relevant <i>Calls to Action</i> ? How is Western embedding the Calls into policy?	How do our policies reinforce colonial logics? How do we ground our policies in Euro-Western paradigms?	Are Indigenous people engaged in leadership of policy initiatives? Are policies reflective of Indigenous ways of knowing and doing?
	Administrative Processes	Are financial processes in place to efficiently pay honoraria to Indigenous community members? Is there sufficient budget allocated to do this work ethically and respectfully? Are administrative processes efficient? Are they timely?		
	Institutional & Space Planning	How are we responding to the relevant <i>Calls to Action</i> , and the <i>Calls for Justice</i> ?	Have we interrogated the ways that Western has taken up space on Indigenous lands?	How do our spaces, campus, and the land we occupy, reflect and/or incorporate Indigenous pedagogies and epistemologies? How do we engage Indigenous places and land-based pedagogies in our curriculum? How do our land management policies and practices prioritize native species and Indigenous land management practices?
<b>Administration</b>	Departments / Programs	Do our programs respond to relevant <i>Calls to Action</i> ? Do our programs account for the impact of colonization in the field/discipline, on Indigenous people?	Do our programs make space for decolonial theory and praxis? How has the discipline contributed to upholding colonial logics?	Are our programs responsive to the needs of Indigenous Communities?
	Staffing	Is there a baseline understanding of Reconciliation and what that means for our work at Western?	Do we give staff time and resources to learn/unlearn? Are staff trained adequately to do this work? Do strategic and operational plans identify decolonization as a priority?	Do we have a strong Indigenous staff/faculty complement?
<b>Staff</b>	Services	Do our services respond to the <i>Calls to Action</i> or <i>Calls for Justice</i> ?	Do our services reinforce colonial logics? Are they accessible to Indigenous people?	Are our services culturally relevant and appropriate?
<b>Human Resources</b>	Employee Supports	Are our supports trauma-informed for Indigenous people?	How do we support Indigenous staff and faculty experiencing racism, or microaggressions?	Do we offer culturally relevant and appropriate employee supports and opportunities?
<b>Student Groups</b>	Student Supports	Do our services respond to the <i>Calls to Action</i> or <i>Calls for Justice</i> ?	Do our services reinforce colonial logic? Are they accessible to Indigenous people?	Are our services culturally relevant and appropriate?



## A Note on the Complexity of Reconciliation

Sometimes Reconciliation becomes exclusively focused on the impact of Residential Schools on Indigenous Peoples, despite many of the *Calls to Action* (2015) applying beyond that legacy. Many Indigenous scholars have critiqued the way that Reconciliation has become institutionalized (Simpson, 2011) and made into a 'spectacle' (Daigle, 2019). By narrowly defining 'Reconciliation' as "focused only on residential schools rather than the broader set of relationships aimed at assimilation and political genocide, legislation and practices, there is a risk that reconciliation will "level the playing field in the eyes of Canadians" (Simpson, 2011, p. 14). In this light, it is also important to critically reflect on the ways that "colonial power gets reproduced through spectacles and good-feeling reconciliation mandates implemented by Canadian postsecondary institutions" (Daigle, 2019, p. 708).

While many Indigenous people and scholars see value in Reconciliation, the *Calls to Action*, and working collaboratively in institutional settings, Simpson's questions: "Are we participating in a process that allows the state to co-op the individual and collective pain and suffering of our people, while also criminalizing the inter-generational impacts of residential schools and ignoring the larger neo-assimilation project to which our children are now subjected?" (Simpson, 2011, p. 21). This query is something that Indigenous colleagues may be grappling with as they participate in relevant work of the university, such as helping to draft strategic plans, organize events and learning opportunities, among other activities.



## ALLYSHIP PRINCIPLE

### Nurturing Culturally Inclusive and Trauma-Informed Learning Environments

This Allyship Principle builds on Western’s existing commitment to create positive, safe, working and learning environments for everyone. Trauma-informed practices account for an individuals’ complex identities and relationships to the topics being discussed.

This can look like posting culturally appropriate helplines for emotional and mental support during the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (NDTR) or intervening in conversations when allies notice an Indigenous student or colleague is emotionally impacted. It can also look like asking Indigenous colleagues if they have capacity to help you understand nuance around something such as identity, or residential schools, before launching into the topic.

Creating ‘safe’ emotional and mental spaces can be difficult, because we can’t predict whether people will say or do harmful things, we can only control how we respond to them. Unpacking bias, stereotypes, and harmful misconceptions is emotionally intensive labour. Many people are not aware that something they’ve said or done is offensive –and in the spirit of collegiality, and relationality, Indigenous colleagues do their best to help people understand their missteps in an effective way. This often creates a dynamic where Indigenous colleagues are expected to divorce their own feelings of discomfort to attend to the discomfort of non-Indigenous colleagues when explaining difficult nuances. This can leave Indigenous people, especially those with a direct relationship to the topic at hand, open to re-traumatization. As educators, as well as staff and leadership in an educational institution, we have a responsibility to provide accountable learning environments for ourselves, and our students. This means that while we recognize everyone is on their own unlearning journey, we must consider the impacts on each other and account for that emotional labour.

Creating inclusive spaces for Indigenous ways of knowing and being to flourish, or for Indigenous perspectives to be heard, requires actioning many of the principles in this document. Creating culturally-inclusive space is strengthened through Indigenous cultural literacy (Allyship Principle #2) and looks like addressing barriers to Indigenous cultural expression, such as requiring advanced permission to burn medicines (e.g., smudging). Cultural, or Indigenous literacy is also being cognizant to avoid ‘pan-Indianism’ (amalgamating diverse Indigenous cultural practices together as if they are one), as not all Indigenous people practice aspects of their culture or spirituality in the same way. Sometimes, a culturally inclusive space for one Indigenous group may not be the same for another. For example, in some First Nations cultures, owls are not typically utilized in artistic designs because of the stories and teachings they carry, while Inuit utilize owls in their art and designs because of the stories and teachings they carry in their culture.

#### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR NURTURING CULTURALLY INCLUSIVE AND TRAUMA-INFORMED LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS:

Use the resources listed below to support your understanding of this principle:

- Brianna Olsen’s [Trauma-Informed Interventions through an Indigenous worldview](#) (webinar)
- Suzane Method’s [A Trauma-Informed Approach to Teaching the Colonization of the Americas](#)
- Elwood Jimmy, Vanessa Andreotti and Sharon Stein’s [Towards Braiding](#)
- York University’s [Indigenous Cultural Competency and Trauma-Informed Training](#)

#### INDIGENOUS ALLYSHIP PRINCIPLE: REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What can I do to cultivate trauma-informed environments?
- What can I do to be more inclusive of Indigenous ways of knowing and being, cultures and perspectives?
- What kinds of approaches, frameworks, and tools can I engage with in situations where I observe something that is culturally insensitive, racist (i.e., microaggressions), or that disregards trauma-informed frameworks?
- How do you usually respond to being called out on harmful practices that are perceived as normal?
- How equipped are you to have difficult conversations without relationships falling apart?
- “If you hear something that triggers you or makes you upset, what strategies and group dynamics might help ground you so that you can return to a more generative space, and how can you ensure these strategies don’t rely on Indigenous Peoples’ emotional labour?” (Jimmy, Andreotti, & Stein, 2019, p. 50)
- Are you able to engage with and hold space for multiple, competing, or even contradictory Indigenous perspectives among Indigenous Peoples?
- Individual Indigenous people, like all people, are also complex and contradictory. Are you able to engage with and hold space for the full, complex humanity of the Indigenous individuals you work with?



## SECTION TWO: FINAL REFLECTION

- 01 How did this section make you feel?
- 02 When have you seen (or performed) Allyship that seemed generous on the surface but upheld power structures?
- 03 What ideas in this section caused discomfort for you? What ideas resonated?
- 04 Are you only open to Indigenous perspectives that make sense to you? How much do you expect those perspectives to be explained in ways that you’re already comfortable with? (Jimmy, Andreotti & Stein, 2019)
- 05 How might your desire for clarity, certainty, or progress interfere with genuine relationship-building?
- 06 Are you willing to be genuinely changed by what you encounter and learn on your journey to Allyship



## SECTION THREE: COMMITMENT



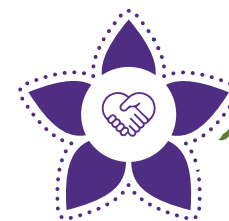


## SECTION THREE: COMMITMENT

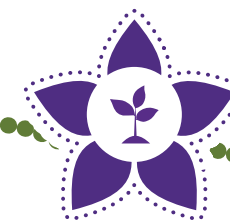
This guide has been divided into three sections, following the three long steps articulated by Jimmy, Andreotti, and Stein (2019). These sections are anticipated places where aspiring allies will learn, step away from, and then revisit the different principles outlined within that section.

Section 3 focuses on Commitment, where allies and prospective allies move from performative support to principled, accountable, and sustained relational practice. In order to engage in decolonizing, Indigenizing and Reconciliation processes “a set of principled commitments toward the ‘long haul’ of this process needs to be in place, including a commitment to continue the work even/especially when things become difficult and uncomfortable” (Jimmy, Andreotti, & Stein, p. 23).

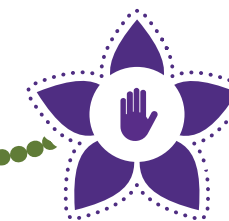
**IT IS IN THE COMMITMENT SECTION THAT READERS ARE ASKED TO WORK THROUGH THE FINAL THREE ALLYSHIP PRINCIPLES:**



Respecting Indigenous community leadership, protocols, processes & approaches



Supporting the Reclamation of Indigenous knowledge systems & lands through Indigenous-led cultural resurgence & language revitalization



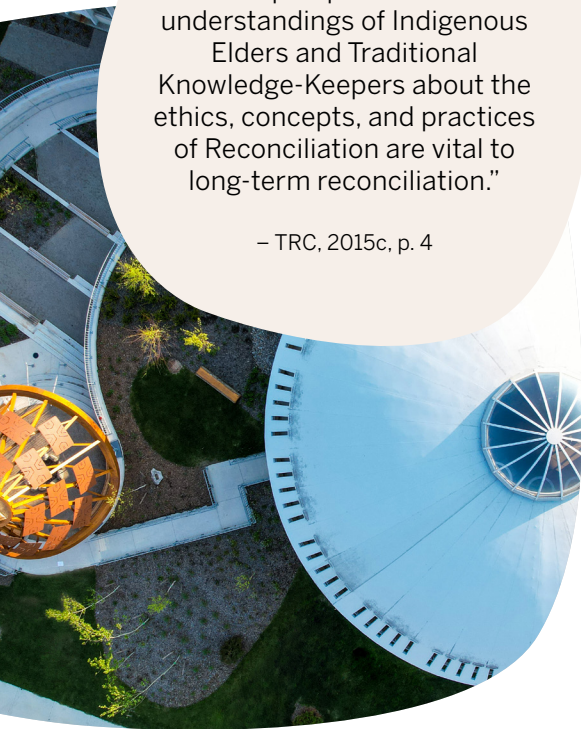
Closing gaps, removing barriers, decolonizing; & dismantling oppressive systemic structures



**TRC PRINCIPLE #7:**

“The perspectives and understandings of Indigenous Elders and Traditional Knowledge-Keepers about the ethics, concepts, and practices of Reconciliation are vital to long-term reconciliation.”

– TRC, 2015c, p. 4



**ALLYSHIP PRINCIPLE**

## Respecting Indigenous Community Leadership, Protocols, Processes and Approaches

Indigenous leadership is often non-hierarchical, collaborative, and consensus-building. Engaging Indigenous people meaningfully in projects and initiatives from conceptualization to projected outcomes reduces the risk of harm in the relationship and in outcomes. For some projects, such as land use and development, “Free, Prior, and Informed” consent is critical, and aligns with Canadian and international law (United Nations, 2007).

The concept “nothing about us, without us” is often shared by Western’s Vice-Provost & Associate Vice-President Indigenous Initiatives, Dr. Christy R. Bressette. When it comes to decisions that impact Indigenous communities, students, and people, Indigenous people need to be a part of not only the decisions, but the processes leading up to them. This relational work can take time and should “move at the speed of trust” (brown, 2017, 31).

This also means developing a thorough understanding of Indigenous governance and concepts of Indigenous leadership, and the nuances between consulting with Indigenous people as individuals, versus entire Indigenous Communities, or formal or informal Indigenous Leadership. For example, Indigenous leadership are not limited to, but can include Elders, Youth, members of Assemblies or Tribal Councils, Chiefs Associations, Treaty Organizations, Confederations, Clan Leaders, Hereditary Chiefs, Band-Elected Chief and Council and/or members of various Indigenous organizations. Who to engage and when can be difficult to navigate and might even require the support of hiring a navigator, coordinator or advisor to support the work.

In many communities Indigenous Leaders seek to represent consensus from their Nation, or the Nations and Peoples they are elected or appointed to lead –but the impact of colonialism means this is not always the case. Recognizing when to engage Indigenous experts, conduct Indigenous community engagement and engage Indigenous leaders is part of honouring Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination in decision-making and relationship-building processes. In many cases, solely engaging one Leader, or a specific type of Leadership, does not give a full representation of the community’s needs and/or desires.

**IF YOU ARE REQUESTING KNOWLEDGE SHARING AT AN EVENT, OR SEEKING KNOWLEDGE THAT CAN ONLY BE GAINED THROUGH AN ELDER OR A KNOWLEDGE KEEPER, YOU SHOULD:**

- be mindful of which Community or Nation the information is relevant for;
- develop a relationship with the respective Community; and,
- offer an honorarium or compensation for the Knowledge Keeper’s time.

If you are engaging in an independent learning journey, you should seek out Indigenous sources such as:

- American Indians in Children’s Literature Blog: <https://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com>
- Unsettling Canada by Arthur Manuel: <https://unsettlingcanada.com>

For example, for some communities, engaging both Indigenous Band Elected Council and Clan Mothers (matriarchal leaders) can create a more fulsome picture of the community’s needs/desires. Considering all the other principles listed in this resource, if actions and projects circumvent Indigenous leaderships’ autonomy and oversight, there is a risk of reproducing colonial harm.

Additionally, Indigenous Nations have their own distinct protocols and processes surrounding community engagement, consensus-building, knowledge-sharing, research, governance, and education. Sometimes these timelines do not line up with academic calendars or grant deadlines. When collaborating, make sure you create achievable timelines with Indigenous collaborators, that account for the needs they identify which may involve steps including, but not limited to visiting, engaging Knowledge-Keepers, relationship-building, understanding cultural protocols, and establishing a collaborative process or framework.

In terms of Allyship recognition, Indigenous Communities are best positioned to determine their own allies, since self-declaring can be a form of performative Allyship and is commonplace. Recognition of allies may be explicit through use of a term or may be implied through a request for collaboration or willingness to work together. It is also important to accept the ‘right to refuse’ collaboration or engagement by Indigenous People(s) and take this as a learning opportunity.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR RESPECTING INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP, PROTOCOLS, PROCESSES AND APPROACHES:**

Use the resources listed below to support your understanding of this principle:

- Rachel Chong (2022) [Indigenous Information Literacy](#)
- Western University’s [More than Words: Guide to Land Acknowledgments at Western](#)
- Western University’s [Indigenous Teaching & Learning Series](#)
- Western University’s [Connecting for Climate Change Action](#) (Online course)
- Western’s Office of Indigenous Initiatives [Treaties Recognition Week 2020 Speakers Series](#)
  - [Episode 1](#)
  - [Episode 2](#)
  - [Episode 3](#)
- Ontario Institute for Studies on Education (OISE)’s – [Online Modules](#)
  - [We Are All Treaty People](#)
  - [A Short History of Indigenous Education](#)
  - [Indigenous Ways of Knowing](#)
  - [Indigenous Worldviews](#)
- Yellowhead Institute’s
  - [Land Back Report & Online Course](#)
  - [Cash Back Report](#)
- [Indigenous Students, Indigeneity & Experience in Universities](#)
- Assembly of First Nations’ [Treaties & Why They’re Important](#)
- Assembly of First Nations’ [What is cultural competency?](#)
- Centennial College’s [Our Stories: First Peoples in Canada](#)
- Kory Wilson and Colleen Hodgson’s [Pulling Together: Foundations Guide](#)

**INDIGENOUS ALLYSHIP PRINCIPLE: REFLECTION QUESTIONS:**

- Am I familiar with the cultural and governance protocols of Indigenous colleagues/ organizations/ Nations I work with?
- How will I gauge what is appropriate protocol?
- Am I able to accommodate processes and timelines of Indigenous colleagues/ collaborators? Why or why not?
- What is Indigenous Leadership generally? What is Indigenous Leadership culturally, to the Peoples of the lands on which I work/teach and/ or create?
- Who can be considered an Indigenous Leader? Who determines this? How do I understand leadership, culturally? How does this align or diverge from my own cultural or political concepts of Leadership?
- Am I seeking engagement with specific kinds of Indigenous leadership, while ignoring others, based on my own cultural understandings? Who are local Indigenous leaders I should be aware of?
- How do I engage with Indigenous leadership?
- Have I engaged Indigenous leadership/ collaborators in a tokenistic way in the past?
- How can I shift this practice for next time?
- Who are the leaders/champions of Indigenization and/or Reconciliation, and/or Decolonization, in my field/ discipline/unit/department/faculty? Are they Indigenous? How does this reflect Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination? How are they accountable to Indigenous communities if they do not share that positionality? What mechanism are in place to ensure that accountability?
- How can I support and integrate Indigenous protocols and processes, while critically reflecting on cultural appropriation?



## ALLYSHIP PRINCIPLE

# Supporting the Reclamation of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Lands Through Indigenous-Led Cultural Resurgence and Language Revitalization

Many Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers have visited Western over the years, sharing their knowledges and stories, such as the *Seven Sacred Grandfather Teachings and the Great Law of Peace* (see below). Often, cultural teachings like this require context that is best provided by Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers who are recognized by their Nations and Communities as carriers of the knowledge to provide these teachings. Engaging Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and community members, and inviting them to speak and share knowledge at Western, is one way the university is observing protocols around knowledge-sharing. By supporting Indigenous-led cultural resurgence and language revitalization at Western, we are strengthening intergenerational cultural transmissions.

For many Indigenous people, reconnecting, or strengthening their connections to languages, cultures and knowledges is a significant part of their healing and reconciliation process. Though processes of Indigenization and incorporating Indigenous languages and knowledges into all facets of the university are a part of our mandate and strategic plans, we sometimes take for granted how hard Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers work to gain that knowledge, and how much they fought for it. The reality is, due to colonization, a lot of Indigenous people have not had opportunities to know and embody their culture, governance or language; or have relationships to Elders and Knowledge Keepers in their Nation.

Since many Indigenous Communities are revitalizing and reclaiming their ways of knowing and being, Allies can support their goals and desires by ensuring Indigenous people are prioritized in the development of learning opportunities around Indigenous ways of knowing and being. We need to consider how Indigenous colleagues need time and opportunities to connect with Elders and Knowledge Keepers to maintain relationships and continue to provide their holistic cultural lens that their work requires, before making this knowledge widely available to the non-Indigenous Western community.



## THE GREAT LAW OF PEACE

This law shares the story of the Peacemaker who was sent to help the Haudenosaunee People when they were experiencing a time of feud and violence between each other. In this teaching, the Creator sends a message to the people through the Peacemaker, who went to speak to each of the five Haudenosaunee Nations about creating peace. The five Nations all eventually agreed to come together, each maintaining their own independent leadership, and the Great Law of Peace was solidified, forming the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. (Haudenosaunee Confederacy, 2019; Oneida Nation of Wisconsin, n.d.). This story is integral to Haudenosaunee ways of being and helps to guide people in living in harmony and peace with one another.

### TRC PRINCIPLE #8:

“Supporting Indigenous Peoples’ cultural revitalization and integrating Indigenous knowledge systems, oral histories, laws, protocols, and connections to the land into the Reconciliation process are essential.”

– TRC, 2015c, p. 4

## ENGAGING ELDERS & KNOWLEDGE KEEPERS

Elders and Knowledge Keepers play vital roles in their Communities, Clans, and Nations in the transmission of cultural knowledge and language. When they offer their knowledge for a class or event, they are taking time that could be spent with their Communities, which is often a full-time occupation that supports their livelihood. Their time and expertise should be valued through appropriate compensation in places like post-secondary institutions. As such, it is a good practice to provide an honorarium to recognize the contributions of Indigenous Peoples through various engagements. [As per direction provided by Western’s Office of Indigenous Initiatives](#), these are typically provided at the time of engagement, by cash or cheque, and at minimum should be at a rate of \$100 per hour; \$350 for a half day; and \$700 for a full day. Travel and mileage expenses should also be covered, in addition to an honorarium. Honoraria are not applicable for those employed by Western.

## THE SEVEN GRANDFATHER TEACHINGS

The Seven Grandfather Teachings include Love, Respect, Bravery, Truth, Honesty, Humility, and Wisdom. These teachings are gifts that Indigenous Peoples implement in pursuit of a “good life.” The Creator gifted these teachings to the Anishinaabe People, as guidance on how-to live in harmony with all living things, including one another (Seven Generations Education Institute, 2021).



## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR SUPPORTING THE RECLAMATION OF INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS AND LANDS:

Use the resources listed below to support your understanding of this principle:

- Western University’s [Guidelines for Working with Indigenous Community Members](#)
- Western University’s [Procedure for Burning Traditional Medicines on Campus](#)
- Western University’s Indigenous Days of Significance (i.e., June is Indigenous History Month; June 21 is National Indigenous Peoples’ Day; and September 30 is the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation).
- Sogoreate’ Land Trust’s [Rematriation Resource Guide](#)
- The Canadian Encyclopedia’s [Cultural Appropriation & Indigenous Peoples of Canada](#)
- Indigenous Corporate Training’s [Why Cultural Appropriation is Disrespectful](#)
- Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE)’s [Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being](#)
- Simon Fraser University’s [Think Before you Appropriate: A Guide for Creators & Designers](#)
- First Nations Information Governance Centre (FNIGC)’s [Understanding the First Nations Principles of OCAP](#)
- Leanne Simpson’s [Dancing on Our Turtle’s Back](#)

## INDIGENOUS ALLYSHIP PRINCIPLE: REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- What do I think I know or understand about Indigenous cultures and knowledges? How did I come to learn that?
- Have I unintentionally engaged in cultural appropriation? How can I learn from this and move forward in a good way?
- Do I have awareness of local/ national days of significance to Indigenous Peoples?
- Where do I see myself supporting Indigenous-led reclamation and/or revitalization?
- When I invite Indigenous people to speak, or collaborate with, do I ask if there are any protocols to be observed?
- When is it appropriate to offer tobacco to an Indigenous person?



## ALLYSHIP PRINCIPLE

### Closing gaps, removing barriers, decolonizing; and dismantling oppressive systemic structures

Like other post-secondary institutions across Turtle Island, Western University occupies Indigenous land, and as an “arm of the settler state,” reproduces colonial “logics of elimination, capital accumulation and dispossession” (Grande, 2018, pp. 47, 51) that perpetuate settler power & privilege.

This means Western’s institutional structures are based in the same ideas used to justify colonial violence against Indigenous Peoples, including the theft of Indigenous lands, languages, cultures, identities, and children. Dismantling these oppressive systems and structures is an ethical imperative for those with power and privilege. An important part of this is witnessing—listening to and observing—these systems in action and believing Indigenous Peoples when they share their experiences. We can also critically interrogate the systems and structures that perpetuate violence against Indigenous Peoples by engaging a decolonial lens and moving toward embodying a decolonial praxis. Like lifelong learning, decolonizing is also a process with no definitive end.

If you are not sure where to start identifying systemic structures and barriers, there are many reports and recommendations available that examine the gaps, barriers, and oppressive systems and structures Indigenous Peoples face. Familiarity with ones relevant to your field/discipline can help you to create opportunities to dismantle them.

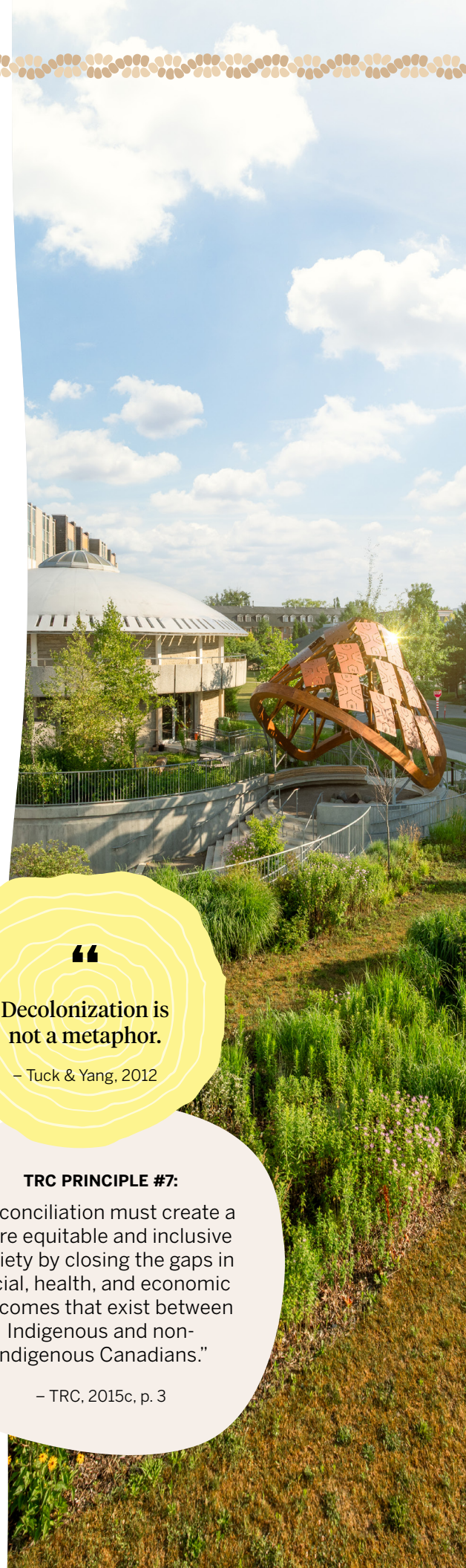
#### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR CLOSING GAPS, REMOVING BARRIERS, DECOLONIZING; AND DISMANTLING OPPRESSIVE SYSTEMIC STRUCTURES:

Use the resources listed below to support your understanding of this principle:

- Western University’s
  - [Maamwi Gizekewag: Indigenous Curriculum & Learning Subcommittee Report](#)
  - [Towards a Decolonizing Pedagogy](#) (Module 2, Indigenous Teaching and Learning Series)
- National Indian Brotherhood/ Assembly of First Nations’s [Indian Control of Indian Education](#)
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s [Final Report and Calls to Action](#)
- Government of Canada’s [Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples](#)
- National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG)’s [Report and Call to Justice](#)
- Chiefs of Ontario’s
  - [Health Portal Reports and Policy Recommendations](#)
  - [Decolonizing Education Modules](#)
- Assembly of First Nations’ [Resolutions](#)
- Association of Iroquois & Allied Indians’ [Resolutions and Policy Areas](#)
- Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami’s [Strategies and Policy Guidelines](#)
- Indigenous Climate Action’s [Decolonizing Climate Policy in Canada](#)
- Yellowhead Institute’s
  - [Calls to Action Accountability 2023 Status Update](#)
  - [How Do We Solve Structural Racism: A 5X5 Review](#)
- Tuck and Yang’s [Decolonization is not a Metaphor](#)
- Adrienne Marie Brown’s [Emergent Strategy](#)
- Candace Brunette-Debassige’s [An Indigenous Pedagogy for Decolonization](#)
- [Sandy Grande’s Refusing the University](#)

#### INDIGENOUS ALLYSHIP PRINCIPLE: REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- What are some of the barriers or gaps that Indigenous People face, that are relevant to my work? If I do not know, how would I find that out?
- What is my familiarity with Indigenous-focused reports, Calls to Action, Justice and Strategic Plans? What are some tangible actions I could consider working towards individually?
- What are the barriers I personally experience to doing Reconciliation and decolonizing work? How can I address them?
- What is decolonization? What is a decolonizing lens?
- How can I apply a decolonizing lens in my field? Discipline?
- How can I make time to learn more, if I am interested?
- What opportunities are there in my everyday roles at work to apply a decolonizing lens?
- Who is doing this work in my unit, faculty or department that I can collaborate with? Support?



“  
**Decolonization is not a metaphor.**  
– Tuck & Yang, 2012

**TRC PRINCIPLE #7:**  
“Reconciliation must create a more equitable and inclusive society by closing the gaps in social, health, and economic outcomes that exist between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians.”  
– TRC, 2015c, p. 3



## SECTION THREE: FINAL REFLECTION

- 01 How did this section make you feel?
- 02 What does Commitment look like if there is no recognition, reward, or resolution?
- 03 What are you willing to give up – not just offer – in the service of reciprocal relationships?
- 04 What ideas in this section caused discomfort? What resonated?
- 05 What responsibilities does our organization have to the land it is on? What are your personal responsibilities?
- 06 What does it mean to respect and honour the traditional Indigenous custodians of this place? What should we, as representatives of our organization, be doing to build a respectful relationship with the land and its original caretakers?



**CONCLUSION:  
HOW DO I KNOW  
IF I'M AN ALLY?**



## Conclusion: How Do I Know if I'm an Ally?

Even if you don't think of yourself as an ally, Indigenous colleagues might see you that way –but Allyship is not a bar that is only met by achieving the Principles for Indigenous Allyship. It's a relationship, and relationships are messy.

Mistakes happen, and learning is ongoing. Allies are not often recognized for their efforts and commitment to supporting the Indigenous Community in large, ostentatious ways. Both Indigenous and allied faculty, students, and community members who engaged in the development of this guide said that it is more important to be recognized by Indigenous Communities as an ally than to self-declare. Ultimately, Indigenous Communities are best positioned to determine their allies. Knowing or not knowing whether you are an ally should not stop you from engaging with this guide or the principles outlined within it –but where you get stuck in these processes and critical self-reflections might help you understand where your Allyship praxis might need some extra support and attention.

There are some indicators that may be helpful in gauging one's efforts to be an ally. When an Indigenous person or community engages with non-Indigenous colleagues and asks for support, this can mean that trust is being established, and that the individual has been recognized as taking on a good supporting role. Further, by inviting individuals to attend different meetings, events, or ceremonies, an Indigenous community or person may be recognizing the individual is making meaningful contributions or is in a good position to learn.

Remember that transformational growth is challenging, and mistakes are inevitable along the way. What is important is that individuals acknowledge their mistakes, reflect on what they could have done differently, and apply this new knowledge to advocate for and support Indigenous Peoples.

## How can I strengthen my allyship praxis?

### UNDERSTAND CHALLENGES AND ASK HOW TO BE SUPPORTIVE

Allyship requires the use of active listening and learning. While this is important to one's personal Allyship journey, it is critical that individuals are mindful of how they are engaging with Indigenous Peoples. Of particular importance, it is necessary to recognize that many Indigenous Peoples, including Indigenous staff, faculty, and students at Western, experience work overload and are over engaged. Requesting engagement from already over engaged staff members is an example of a disingenuous and one-sided relationship, as priority is placed on the knowledge to be gained, while the wellbeing of the Indigenous individual sharing the knowledge is discounted. While it is positive that there are increased motivations to include Indigenous engagement, it is common for the Indigenous employees to be overly engaged. This often occurs when they are the only Indigenous contacts.

Further challenges arise when people pursue engagement with the belief that any Indigenous individual is a knowledge expert on all topics related to Indigenous Peoples. It is important for allies to be mindful of these challenges and identify ways that they can learn and grow, while being supportive to the Indigenous Community.

Meaningful and respectful engagement should include providing opportunities for Indigenous people to engage in conversations outside of Indigenous issues. Indigenous Knowledge and the values and perspectives that Indigenous Peoples bring should be considered and included in all types of conversations. It is also important to understand that unnecessary expectations or forced participation do not embody meaningful and respectful engagement. Indigenous Peoples should not be required or expected to engage and share their views in all instances.

It is also important to be mindful of the appropriateness of the types of engagement requested from Indigenous Peoples. Oftentimes, Indigenous People are called upon to address topics or requests on issues that require significant levels of emotional labour, often with quick turnaround times. Emotional labour refers to "situations when someone needs to manage or suppress their own emotions while at work" (Willow, 2019, para.2). Many Indigenous Peoples will agree to engage, despite the associated emotional labour, because they do not want to miss the opportunity for Indigenous engagement. Further, allies can be mindful of the ongoing impact of intergenerational trauma and the other challenges Indigenous Peoples face within colonial society. Specifically, many Indigenous Peoples face profoundly negative impacts through intergenerational trauma caused by the Residential and Day School systems (Gaywsh & Mordoch, 2018). It is common for Indigenous Peoples to experience different stress triggers, family and cultural disconnection, lack of confidence, as well as identity challenges (Gaywsh & Mordoch, 2018). It is important that allies are mindful of these traumas, as well as further challenges created by the current school system, which were designed to support the settler colonial agenda (Poitras Pratt et al., 2018).

Certain discussions can be triggering to Indigenous Peoples and their peers, so work should be done to identify these, and allies should always show compassion and offer support. When planning engagements, individuals should seek guidance from appropriate resources, such as Western's Office of Indigenous Initiatives (or through the online resources listed in this guide), to determine potentially triggering content. If you are unsure if content is sensitive, it is best to include a content / trigger warning and appropriate resources. Every Indigenous person has a unique history and will respond to sensitive topics differently. During engagements, it is important that Indigenous Peoples have space and time to take breaks when needed and have access to culturally appropriate resources, such as support hotlines or counselling, when required.

### QUESTIONS TO REFLECT ON BEFORE ENGAGING AN INDIGENOUS PERSON WITH A REQUEST FOR KNOWLEDGE:

- Can I find this knowledge myself through existing resources?
- Is this knowledge the person holds (is it their area)?
- Am I providing this person enough time to reflect and engage?
- Is this ask going to involve emotional labour and, if so, how can I support this person?
- Is this a safe space and time to ask?
- How will I engage reciprocity (i.e., appropriate compensation) to acknowledge this work?

Making unintended mistakes when your intentions were coming from a good place is not a bad thing or reason to stop pursuing allyship.

**THESE SHOULD BE SEEN AS OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN AND GROW.**

**FOR EXAMPLE, TO ENGAGE AN INDIGENOUS PERSON, STAFF MEMBER, OR STUDENT IN A MEANINGFUL AND RESPECTFUL WAY, ONE SHOULD:**

- evaluate the topic and request for potential distressing themes or information and provide content warnings and support accordingly;
- reflect on whether the topic is relevant to the person being asked to speak (e.g., do not ask an Anishinaabe person to speak to Haudenosaunee history; do not assume every Indigenous person carries the Indigenous Knowledge you seek);
- ask if they have the time or resources to support your request, while appreciating that they may say no;
- provide advance notice of engagement and requests, including providing any materials for review;
- seek Indigenous Knowledge engagement in broad areas (e.g., sciences, math, engineering, law, etc.)

When engaging, depending on the content or experience, it is important to ensure Indigenous Peoples, and their needs are considered. This may include planning considerations such as accessibility or providing Indigenous specific and culturally relevant resources. Additionally, where requests require emotional labour, such as input into discussions related to language loss, the topic of Residential Schools, or Indigenous identity for example, the individuals should be provided sufficient time to review and provide feedback. The Indigenous person

should be permitted to review the materials and provide input when it is convenient to them, recognizing they may need to take breaks from the content and have existing workloads. Being mindful of how difficult this work is, the Indigenous person should be provided sufficient time to reflect and provide feedback when it is best for them.

**PARTICIPATE IN INDIGENOUS SPACES, EVENTS AND CEREMONIES IN RESPECTFUL AND ETHICAL WAYS**

Typically, Indigenous spaces, events and ceremonies vary, and not all of these will be open to non-Indigenous peoples. But when invitations are extended, these should be treated as opportunities to build relationships and learn. The best way to learn about cultural practices and protocols is through engagement with Indigenous Peoples. It is important to ensure your intentions for meeting are clear and that you are wanting to engage with respect. Those who are invited to an event or ceremony have been welcomed to participate and should use this as an opportunity to observe, learn, build relationships, and ask questions when appropriate.

**BEFORE YOU VISIT AN INDIGENOUS SPACE/ CEREMONY/EVENT:**

**1. Check event promotions or if the space or event has a website for protocols and/or instructions for attending:**

For example, sometimes ceremonies ask participants who feel comfortable doing so to wear long skirts. This is not a requirement and is intended to be as inclusive as possible.

Non-Indigenous participants are not expected to have a ribbon skirt and might choose to wear a skirt regardless. Some people are sensitive to smoke and may not feel comfortable attending a ceremony where medicine burning is occurring. Other protocols may include bringing tobacco or a “feast bundle” – which is reusable plates and cutlery.

**a. If unclear, ask questions:**

When your intentions come from a curious, respectful and honest place, individuals should not be afraid to ask questions and learn about the role they can take in the event or ceremony. Individuals should try to ask questions about the event or ceremony in advance whenever possible. On campus, staff in spaces like the Wampum Learning Lodge and the Indigenous Student Centre are familiar with answering questions in advance of, and during events to support those who have not engaged before.

**2. Ask if it's ok to participate, but also ask if it's ok to observe, rather than participate:**

Sometimes Indigenous people have closed practices where participation may be limited to specific people of that cultural group. Alternatively, you may be invited to participate but feel uncomfortable doing so –and that is totally ok. While participation is not mandatory in any circumstance, keep in mind how observing rather than directly participating may make Indigenous attendees feel uncomfortable, tokenized, or feed into concerns around ceremony or events becoming a “spectacle” or something participants consume, rather than embody. Lastly, it is disingenuous to portray opportunities to observe as something you participated in.

For example, teaching your class about ‘participating’ in a ceremony that is typically a closed practice that you were invited to observe.

**3. While visiting an Indigenous event or space:**

- Be attentive and aware of your surroundings; listen to Masters of Ceremonies and event leads for instructions:** For example, while attending an event or ceremony, individuals should ask before taking pictures or videos. It may not be appropriate to take pictures or videos at certain times, such as during ceremonies, or at all, so asking questions in advance when appropriate will be important.
- Take note of what is around you:** Learning through observation can help you to understand cultural practices and protocols, which can be applied in future engagements. For example, Elders and youth are often invited to take food first. Other observations may include how to smudge or offer tobacco in a fire. If you are unsure in the moment, always ask questions to clarify.
- Avoid touching things:** Medicines, regalia and other cultural objects are not to be touched unless the person is invited to.
- Never assume:** Do not assume that all ceremony and event protocols are the same. Different Knowledge Holders and facilitators have different teachings and may conduct things differently than you have observed in the past.

**INDIGENOUS SPACES ON WESTERN UNIVERSITY CAMPUS**

In response to Western’s Indigenous Strategic Plan (2016), Indigenous spaces have been created on campus in consultation with Indigenous staff, students and faculty, fostering a sense of belonging and inclusion.

Some of these spaces, such as the Wampum Learning Lodge (1137 Western Rd, Suite 1200) and the Indigenous Student Centre (Western Student Services Building, Room 2100, 1151 Richmond Street) have limited access, and are accessible to Indigenous students, staff and faculty via registration with the Indigenous Student Centre. Part of the mandate of the Wampum Learning Lodge is to provide “a place of connectivity for everyone at Western who shares a common interest in advancing Indigenous Peoples’ knowledge exchange and the needs of Indigenous Communities. Non-Indigenous Western staff, faculty and students can book spaces within the Wampum Learning Lodge for events and classes relevant to Reconciliation, decolonization and Indigenous Peoples. Due to the capacity of the Wampum Learning Lodge staff, and prioritization of Indigenous student needs, and community bookings, the space cannot accommodate bookings in many circumstances. The Wampum Learning Lodge is not

**BEFORE ENGAGING WITH INDIGENOUS SPACES ON CAMPUS (AND BEYOND), CONSIDER:**

- Have I connected with a staff member before visiting?
- Am I familiar with the space’s protocols?
- Am I requesting access to the space beyond its mandate?
- Am I visiting to use these spaces appropriately, and as they were intended?

a dedicated event space with event staff but relies on the availability and capacity of Office of Indigenous Initiatives, all of whom have full portfolios. These spaces respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action (2015a) and MMIWG Inquiry Calls for Justice (2019) by providing culturally safe and appropriate spaces for Indigenous people on campus. A 2020 research report by Fanshawe College's Institution for Indigenous Learning on Indigenous Spaces thoroughly outlines literature and reports that inform the need for Indigenous-specific spaces on

campus in section five, including the need for physical and mental spaces where:

- Indigenous cultural safety is prioritized, where students, staff and faculty are not required to perform intellectual and emotional labour;
- Intercultural exchange as well as dialogue around Truth, Reconciliation and decolonization is culturally and trauma-informed and;
- Indigenous knowledges, stories, connections to land and communities are centered.

**SOME CONSIDERATIONS FOR BEING AN ALLY IN, AND TO, INDIGENOUS SPACES ON CAMPUS:**

While having Indigenous spaces increases visibility of Indigenous people on campus, and fosters a sense of belonging, sometimes this increased visibility can expose Indigenous staff, faculty and students to microaggressions and racism. To foster cultural safety, respect the intentions of Indigenous spaces to look and operate different than the other buildings and gardens throughout campus, as many cultural objects and medicines live there, and cultural events happen there.

EXAMPLES OF INAPPROPRIATE ENGAGEMENT	SOLUTION
Treating these spaces as "drop in" to access Indigenous staff and knowledges.	Make an appointment or connect with staff before your visit. Review event calendars for events that are open to all.
Unauthorized use of the Ceremonial Arbour and firepit (i.e., after-hours consumption of substances in the medicine garden/fire pit area; eating lunch and leaving garbage).	Increasing Indigenous literacy of all students, staff and faculty on campus. Booking the space in advance for appropriate use (i.e., a class). Ensuring you treat the space as you would your own place of worship.
Harvesting medicines and plants from the garden.	Having a conversation with the staff and faculty who care for this space; building relationships; following protocols.
Accessing the space outside of open-to-all events (i.e., "cutting through" or studying).	Reflect on the intentions and purposes of these spaces.
Taking pictures	Ask if it's ok to take pictures. Consider the context your photo is being used within – are you misrepresenting your relationship to the space?

## Allyship Guide: Post Reflection Questions

ROSE	BUD	THORN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What resonates or aligns with your current praxis?</li> <li>• What resources or toolkits have you accessed and found helpful? Why?</li> <li>• What responsibilities do you feel you already are embodying?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are you most curious about?</li> <li>• What resources, modules, or toolkits are you looking forward to checking out?</li> <li>• What responsibilities do you see yourself taking up?</li> <li>• What opportunities do you see to implement these principles in your work?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is not aligning?</li> <li>• What is challenging me, or making me uncomfortable?</li> <li>• Where do I need the most support in understanding, or implementing?</li> <li>• How will I commit to learning and unlearning? What's my action plan?</li> <li>• What are some resources I find unhelpful? Why?</li> </ul>

## Reflective Questions to guide Institutional Accountability for Teams/ Units/ and Faculties

1. How are we measuring our accountability to Indigenous Allyship, and progress on this work? How can we hold each other accountable?
2. How can we know if we are being Indigenous allies?
3. How is our unit/ faculty, or the institution at large measuring its progress towards Reconciliation? Is this assessment within an Indigenous framework?

**QUESTION FOR REFLECTION:**

- What are the dangers of taking a pan-Indigenous approach? How might this be addressed?

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# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Allyship:** an ongoing process of learning, unlearning, and action. It involves recognizing and challenging systems of power and privilege that marginalize Indigenous Peoples and other equity-deserving groups. For non-Indigenous people, allyship means understanding the impacts of settler-colonialism and reflecting on one's role in upholding or dismantling systemic inequality. It also includes "calling in" others with compassion to promote awareness and respectful behavior (Native Women's Association of Canada, n.d.).

**Burnout:** is a work-related condition that results in feeling low energy and cynical about one's occupation and can sometimes negatively impact one's professional performance (WHO, 2019).

**Colonization:** a process of establishing control over Indigenous peoples and lands. There are different types of colonialism around the world. In Canada, settler colonialism persists as an ongoing process tied to colonial myths and ideologies and settler state structures that control Indigenous lives and futures.

**Decolonial:** A critical theory and praxis related to historical and ongoing forms of colonialisms in research. The purpose is to redress colonial power imbalances and empower Indigenous peoples in the pursuit of their own research need, and desires futures.

**Decolonization:** Decolonization can be understood as involving "the confronting and unsettling [of] the impact of colonial histories, ideologies, experiences, and legacies on disciplines, archives, canons, curricula, methodologies, and pedagogies, as well as on structures of governance, institutional design, and cultures, symbols, and ceremonies. Decolonization is a necessary and ongoing process of unlearning, uncovering, and transforming legacies of colonialism, as well as utilizing the educational and knowledge systems available to relearn and rebuild the social, cultural, and linguistic foundations that were lost, or eroded through colonialism. Decolonization also requires making space, balancing, generating, and enabling diverse knowledge systems to thrive in the academy as well as in and through educational and knowledge transmitting places for Indigenous Peoples, the formerly colonized or continuing colonized nations, peoples, and cultural knowledge systems" (Smith et al., 2021, p. 6-7)

**Discrimination:** refers to "the unjust or prejudicial treatment of individuals or groups based on characteristics such as race, ethnicity, age, sex, or ability" (American Psychological Association, 2024, para. 1). In the context of Indigenous Peoples, discrimination includes both individual acts and systemic policies or practices that disadvantage Indigenous individuals or communities without valid justification—contributing to ongoing social, economic, and health inequities (Canadian Human Rights Commission, 2025).

**Elders:** highly respected individuals who are often, but not always, senior citizens of a community who have and continue to demonstrate an admirable balance of their wisdom, harmony, and actions within their daily lives. Elders are recognized and designated by the community. They are frequently considered to be Knowledge Keepers of Indigenous history, traditional teachings, Ceremonies, and healing practices.

**Emotional Labour:** refers to the process of "controlling one's emotions to meet the expectations of a role or job" (Psychology Today, 2025, para. 1), often by suppressing genuine feelings and displaying emotions deemed appropriate in professional or social settings (Psychology Today, 2025).

**Epistemic Racism:** the racial and deficit positioning of the knowledge of one racial group over another where the racialized group's knowledges are not considered valued or legitimate.

**Extractive Research:** A research approach where investigations are conducted on, about, or for communities, but are primarily driven by the researchers' own professional interests, goals, or perceptions of community needs and benefits—rather than in collaboration with or under the direction of those communities themselves. This model often overlooks the voices, priorities, and agency of the people being studied, and may result in outcomes that serve external stakeholders more than the communities involved.

**In A Good Way (Good Heart / Way or Mino-Bimaadiziwin):** striving to live in accordance with mino-bimaadiziwin (<https://treaty2.ca/circles/>), an Anishinabemowin (Anishinaabe language) expression that means living in accordance with the Teachings to enjoy a good life, with good intentions and actions (Rheault, 1999).

**Indigenous Data Sovereignty:** the right of "Indigenous Peoples, communities, and Nations to manage, oversee, and control data created by or concerning them. The concept of sovereignty highlights that Indigenous Nations are self-governing, which includes authority over their data and knowledge. This principle acknowledges Indigenous Peoples as the ultimate decision-makers regarding their data and knowledge, shifting their role in research from being mere subjects or participants to becoming meaningful partners and co-researchers" (University of Toronto Libraries, 2024, para. 1).

**Indigenous Knowledges:** the concept of Indigenous knowledges in the academy is a relatively new phenomena; however, it is critical to recognize that Indigenous peoples have sought and shared Indigenous knowledge since time immemorial. Its newness to the university simply underscores how Indigenous knowledges have been ignored and marginalized in Westernized universities. Indigenous knowledges' are diverse connected to different Indigenous groups/Nations, tied to their Indigenous languages, lands and places and are thereby complex and difficult to define universally. Some scholars have, however, articulated common characteristics of Indigenous knowledges (Brant-Castellano 2000) which have helped articulate and make visible distinctions of IKS when comparing them to Euro Western paradigms.

**Indigenous Epistemology:** an Indigenous epistemology is rooted within an Indigenous paradigm or Indigenous knowledge system. From an Indigenous epistemological perspective, knowledge is considered relational and best understood through the personal subjective self-in-relation to family, nation, land and cosmos including human and non-humans. Elders and storytelling play vital roles in carrying and passing on collective Indigenous epistemologies. Many Indigenous scholars have articulated an Indigenous epistemology in academic research (Absolon, 2011; Archibald, 2009; Kovach, 2009; and Wilson, 2008).

**Indigenous Ontology:** an Indigenous ontological perspective recognizes that knowledge is relational and accountable to Indigenous communities. Principles of respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility (Kirkness & Barnhard, 1991) have been applied to relational ontological approaches to knowing, being and doing.

**Micro aggressions:** "the brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioural, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial, gender, sexual orientation, and religious slights and insults to the target person or group." (Sue, 2010, p. 229)

**Paradigm:** the overarching worldview that shapes the way one understands knowledge and the world.

**Positionality:** refers to the social and political context that shapes a person's identity, values, and perspectives, including aspects such as race, gender, class, ability, and Indigeneity (Queen's University, 2025). It recognizes that these intersecting factors influence how individuals experience the world and engage in research or teaching. A positionality statement is a reflective tool that acknowledges how one's identity and lived experiences inform their approach to knowledge, power, and relationships in academic and community settings (Queen's University, 2025).

**Protocols:** the “guidelines, manners, etiquettes, and rules that are in place to keep Indigenous ways of being, belonging, doing and knowing at the forefront” (Calgary Board of Education, 2022, p. 4). Protocols vary by community; however, some examples include offering tobacco when making a request, providing an honorarium or a gift as a thank you, and offering smudging at meetings, events, or engagements (Calgary Board of Education, 2022).

**Racism:** is “an ideology that either explicitly or implicitly asserts that one racialized group is inherently superior to others. Racist ideology can be openly manifested in racial slurs, jokes or hate crimes. However, it can be more deeply rooted in attitudes, values, and stereotypical beliefs” (OHRC, 2009, p. 12). Anti-Indigenous racism is racism against Indigenous Peoples specifically.

**Self reflection:** is the practice of critically examining how a researcher’s own social positioning, assumptions, and biases shape the research process. It involves ongoing self-awareness and reflection to ensure that personal perspectives are acknowledged and addressed in the design, interpretation, and communication of research (Jamieson, Govaart, & Pownall, 2023).

**Relational Accountability:** is a “situationally and contextually determined [...] form of paying attention to respect, reciprocity, and responsibility in our relationships” (Fraser, 2022, pp. 2-3), which extend to all of Creation.

**Settler:** individuals whose ancestors came to this land willingly to access resources, regardless of how long their family has lived in Canada. Settlers benefit from the colonial structures and systems that dispossess Indigenous peoples of their lands, rights, and cultures. Importantly, being a settler is not inherently a condemnation, but a starting point for reflection, responsibility, and transformation. Settlers are called to move toward becoming relatives (Strobel, 2024).

**Settler colonialism:** Settler colonialism is a structure not an event (Wolfe, 1999) structured by the nation state that appropriates Indigenous lands and serves to erase and displace Indigenous peoples and nationhood, and replace it with a dominant national identity, invasive society and national sovereignty. In doing so, settler colonialism has served to undermine Indigenous sovereignty and their self-determining authority over their lands, lives and futures.

**Speed of Trust:** refers to the principle of building relationships, partnerships, or communities at a pace that respects the time required to establish genuine trust. Rather than rushing processes or outcomes, this approach emphasizes patience and mutual understanding. It emphasizes moving forward only as fast as relationships allow (Pfortmüller, 2022).

**Tokenism:** refers to the superficial or symbolic effort to include individuals from underrepresented or marginalized groups, without addressing systemic issues or ensuring meaningful participation. It often involves selecting one or a few individuals to represent an entire group, which can reinforce stereotypes and further marginalize those individuals (CultureAlly, 2023).

**Turtle Island:** is a term used by many Indigenous Peoples across North America to refer to North America, based on origin stories and the shape of the continent. Using this term is one way to recognize Indigenous sovereignty and challenge colonial borders.

**Unlearn/ing:** a process described as “stripping away the beliefs and ways to act/ behave/ live that have been imposed by our upbringing, by our education, by the society we live in. It means challenging everything we’ve come to know as the ‘way things are supposed to be’ and ‘embracing the way things are’” (Hagan, 2020, para. 3).

**Unsettle/ing:** in an Indigenous context, unsettling refers to the process of disrupting dominant colonial narratives, assumptions, and power structures. It challenges settler comfort and compels critical reflection on one’s positionality, complicity, and responsibility in systems of ongoing settler colonialism (Regan, 2010). Unsettling is not about creating guilt, but about fostering awareness, accountability, and a shift toward decolonial thinking and action.



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Report to: Academic Council  
From: Scholarship and Bursary Committee  
Re: Report on the Meeting  
Date: September 30, 2025

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**For Approval:**

The Scholarship and Bursary Committee met on September 18, 2025, and brings forward to Academic Council two motions for approval.

**International Experiential Learning Awards**

The committee discussed reducing the International Experiential Learning Award from \$1500 to \$1000 per full-time student and from \$1000 to \$500 per part-time student.

**Background & Rationale:**

On June 18, 2025, Academic Council tabled this motion and referred it to the Scholarship and Bursary Committee for further research and discussion.

The International Experiential Learning Awards are (since they were tabled) \$1500 per full-time student and \$1000 per part-time student to support international experiential learning opportunities.

In reviewing these awards, two main perspectives emerged: the current amounts were overly generous; inflation and rising travel expenses may justify maintaining higher levels of support.

The committee agreed that these awards were generous and provided strong incentives for students to participate in travel abroad programs. However, there are hidden and unrecovered costs associated with such courses, which may call to question the sustainability of these amounts.

At present, experiential learning courses at King's are enrolled as overloads, making them ineligible for Ministry funding and tuition collection. According to ministry guidelines, courses must be formally registered in the term in which they are offered. Currently, students do not pay tuition fees for the travel abroad opportunities, as courses are registered in the Winter term while travel occurs in the Summer. Despite this, students still receive awards and bursaries. This structure generates no revenue for King's while the institution absorbs the

additional costs of offering the courses and funding awards. As a result of this, students are effectively availing these courses “at no cost”, and King’s bearing a financial burden.

The committee noted that the Experiential Learning Award is not subject to financial need assessment, which distinguishes it from bursaries.

The committee discussed four potential opportunities for students who are interested in participating in travel abroad programs:

1. OSAP – If courses are registered in the semester in which they are offered (e.g. Summer), students can apply for OSAP funding. The committee requests & recommends the sub-committee on Teaching and Learning to consider this change.
2. Needs-based bursaries – which support equitable access to travel abroad opportunities.
3. Foundation awards – there are foundation awards available, however, at times students may not meet the criteria for foundation awards (e.g.: they may be registered in a different program)
4. The International Experiential Learning Awards.

This award was recently increased to \$1500, from \$1000, a few years ago (for full-time students).

This current proposal seeks to return the award to its original amount for full-time students and to reduce the award for part-time students from \$1000 to \$500.

If approved, the revised amount would be effective from September 2025.

**Motion 1:** That Academic Council approve a revision to the International Experiential Learning Awards for full-time students, reducing it from \$1500 to \$1000, effective September 2025

**Motion 2:** That Academic Council approve a revision to the International Experiential Learning Awards for part-time students, reducing it from \$1000 to \$500, effective September 2025

Respectfully submitted,



Josephine Gemson, PhD  
Interim Associate Academic Dean, and  
Chair, Scholarship & Bursary Committee



**Report to:** Academic Council  
**From:** Governance and Nominations Committee  
**Re:** Report of Committee Discussion  
**Date:** October 14, 2025

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The Governance and Nominating Committee met on Friday Oct 10, 2025.

### **For Decision**

**Draft Motion 1:** To recommend to the Board and Corporate Members that the number of student seats on Academic Council be increased from three (3) to five (5), with the two (2) additional seats to be elected at-large through the King's University College Students' Council (KUCSC), in accordance with section 2.2 of the Academic Council Bylaws regarding elected membership.

Rationale: King's bylaw limits Academic Council to 45 members. There are currently 43 members on Council. Increasing student representation by two seats will make the proportion of students on Council more proportional to academic councils at other universities, while maintaining a faculty majority on Council.

**Draft Motion 2:** That the membership of the Planning and Priorities Committee be amended to include an *ex officio* voting seat for the President of the King's University College Students' Council (KUCSC), in addition to the existing elected student representative.

Rationale: To increase student engagement in the budget process.

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### **For Information**

In business arising from the previous meeting, the committee discussed the motion in Academic Council introduced by Dr. Alison Meek and seconded by Dr. Peter Ibbott. The committee met with Drs. Meek and Ibbott on September 12, and received a revised text of the motion from Dr. Ibbott that same day.

The original motion read:

*Going forward, be it resolved that any institutional decisions at King's University College that carries both financial and academic implications must be presented to and approved by the Academic Council before it can be implemented.*

The revised motion read:

Any proposal that affects the mission of King's University College or carries **both financial and academic** implications for the college will be presented to the Academic Council **for consideration**. Academic Council may recommend the proposal to the Board, propose changes, or refer the proposal back to the party (committee) that moved the proposal for revisions.

The committee considered the revised motion in order to provide advice to Academic Council. The advice of the Governance and Nominations Committee to Academic Council is as follows:

The Governance and Nominations Committee has reviewed the revised motion in light of the Bylaws. The committee finds that the revised motion is overly broad and therefore unclear.

The committee found the reference to “any proposal that affects the mission of King’s University College or carries both financial and academic implications” to be overly broad. By way of example, it is unclear if such oversight extends to questions (whether major or minor) of staffing and resource allocation in units such as the Registrar’s Office, Exam Office, Academic Advising, or ACSD, all of which are connected to the academic mission of the College.

Concern was voiced that the requirement to present proposals to Academic Council “for consideration” does not clarify the bylaw of Academic Council in alignment with the categories of delegated authority, consultation, and recommendation. The motion might even be seen to weaken Academic Council’s delegated authority in specific areas (as outlined in the bylaw) by referring only to “consideration.”

Concern was raised in the committee that the process outlined in the revised motion does not align with governance procedures. For instance, not all proposals are forwarded to the Board for approval. Some proposals/decisions fall within the purview of the President and senior leadership, according to General By-law 5.05, which confers on the President “general management and direction of the business and affairs of the corporation.” The process outlined in the motion does not clarify the process should Academic Council propose changes to a proposal or refer back to the initiating party (committee). In short, the motion would make all administrative decisions subject to Academic Council review, therefore not aligning with the authorities and procedures set out in the Academic Council bylaw.

The committee suggests that should Academic Council wish to signal its will regarding consultation by administration, within the bylaw of Academic Council and respecting delegated authority, a motion could be brought forward that is hortative. Such a motion could not compel action on the part of the Board or administration, but would instead signal an encouragement to behaviour not required by the bylaw.

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### **Mission Integration and Inclusion Committee**

GNC considered feedback from Academic Council with respect to the terms of reference of the Mission Integration and Inclusion Committee, and has referred recommendations, including inclusion of the TRC Final Report and Calls to Action in the committee terms of reference, to the Mission Integration and Inclusion Committee for deliberation.

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### **Research Ethics Review Committee**

The Governance and Nominations Committee considered the concern expressed in Academic Council about Chair and Vice-Chair of the Research Ethics Review Committee, in response to the proposed changes allowing for the Research Officers to chair the committee. The committee considered in particular concerns about conflict of interest and the importance of having a faculty member as chair should concerns or contention arise. In light of these concerns, Governance and Nominating Committee recommends maintenance of the current language in the terms of reference regarding faculty chair and vice-chair of the Research Ethics Review Committee.

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### **Strategic Enrolment Management Committee**

Academic Council referred the matter of the Chair of the Strategic Enrolment Management Committee to the Governance and Nominations Committee. The Committee discussed and decided to leave the Chair as is in the original version of the Strategic Enrolment Management Committee terms of reference which identifies the Chair as the Vice-President Academic Dean.

## Elections

An appendix attached to this report lists individuals acclaimed or elected to vacant seats on Academic Council's committees and the Board through recent calls for nominations, and in cases where more nominees were received than spots available for a position, election through Academic Council's OWL site.

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Member</b>
Appointments Promotion and Tenure Committee	Full-time faculty from Group A	2025-2028	Vidya Natarajan
	Full-Time faculty from Group A	2025-2028	Russell Duvernoy
	Full-Time Faculty from Group B	2025-2028	Adian McFarlane
Cardinal Carter Library Committee	Faculty Members from Social Science	2025-2028	Nic Virtue
Governance and Nominating Committee	Faculty Member from Academic Council	2025-2028	Laura Melnyk Gribble
Mission Integration and Inclusion Committee	Faculty Member from Academic Council	2025-2028	Jeff Preston
	Non-Academic Staff	2025-2028	Alison Powell
Planning and Priorities Committee	Faculty Member	2025-2028	Felipe Rodrigues
	Faculty Member	2025-2028	Hui Feng
Research Committee	Full-time faculty member from Politics and International Relations or History	2025-2028	Graham Broad
	Full-time faculty member from Sociology	2025-2028	Jinette Comeau
Scholarship and Bursary Committee	Faculty Member	2025-2028	Eleni Nicolaidis
	Faculty Member	2025-2028	Mehdi Rasteh
Strategic Enrolment Management Committee	Faculty Member	2025-2027	Ben Muller
Research Ethics Committee	One research discipline expert from School of MEM	2025-2028	Lori Murray
	One research discipline expert from SJPS, CYS, DS, or Thanatology	2025-2028	Klaire Gain
Board of Directors	Faculty Member preferably from Academic Council	2025-2028	Jane Sanders

Respectfully,




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M. Yenson (Chair)

**Educational Policy Committee  
Report to Academic Council  
October 2025**

**Meeting of October 1, 2025**

**For Approval:**

**Motion: That proctor ratios for Examination periods be approved as shown below - Moved by EPC**

EPC reviewed and approved the ratios presented below, as submitted by Tom Gray, Registrar. This proposal was brought forward to support a more effective allocation of resources and improved budget planning. Approved changes will be implemented for the current academic year.

**December/April Final Exam Proctor Ratios in 2024-25:**

<b># of Students in Room</b>	<b># of Proctors</b>
1-24	1
25-99	2
100+	3

**Proposed Proctor Ratios for December/April Exams:**

<b># of Students in Room</b>	<b># of Proctors</b>
0-35	0
36-60	1
61-100	2
100+	3

SOC/SUPR-U Proposals

**For approval:**

- 1. That effective September 1, 2026, *Certificate - Religious and Cultural Diversity* be offered at King's University College. Moved by EPC (New Program Proposal attached below)**

**For information:**

2. That effective September 1, 2026, *King's Religious Studies, Honours Specialization in Religion and Society, Major in Religion and Society, and Minor in Religion and Society* be revised at King's University College.
3. (a) That effective September 1, 2026, *Management and Organizational Studies 2285A/B: Global Business Environment* revised at King's University College.  
(b) That effective September 1, 2024, *Mathematics 1227A/B: Mathematics for Behavioural Sciences* be introduced at King's University College.  
(c) That effective September 1, 2026, *Major in Economics* be revised at King's University College  
(d) That effective September 1, 2026, *Economics 2170A/B: Environmental Economics* at

King's University College.

4. (a) That effective September 1, 2026, Sociology 3384A/B: *Sociology of Tourism* be introduced at King's University College  
(b) That effective September 1, 2026, Sociology 3409F/G: *Thinking Criminology* be introduced at King's University College  
(c) That effective September 1, 2026, Sociology 3405F/G: *Thinking Sociologically* be introduced at King's University College  
(d) That effective September 1, 2026, Sociology 3377F/G: *Sports, Power, and Crime* be introduced at King's University College  
(e) That effective September 1, 2026, Sociology 2251A/B: *Cross-Border Crime* be introduced at King's University College  
(f) That effective September 1, 2026, King's *Sociology Honours Specialization, and Criminology Honours Specialization* be revised at King's University College
5. (a) That effective September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026, the title for CYS 2211A/B be changed to *Children, Crime, and the Media* at King's University College.  
(b) That effective September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026, CYS 2255F/G *Youth, Crime, and Legislation* and CYS 3357F/G *Forest School Practical Seminar* be introduced and *the Childhood and Youth Studies Honours Specialization, Major, and Certificate in Childhood Advocacy* be revised at King's University College.
6. That effective September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026, the *Certificate for Ecological Justice and Climate Ethics* be revised to replace Philosophy 3244F/G with Philosophy 2246F/G under the first 1.0 Course requirement at King's University College.
7. (a) That effective September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026, *Political Science 3324F/G* anti-requisites be revised at King's University College  
(b) That effective September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026, *Political Science 1021F/G* and *Political Science 1022F/G* anti-requisites be revised at King's University College.

Respectfully submitted,



Mark Yenson  
Vice President and Academic Dean (Interim)

## New Undergraduate Program Proposal Process and Template

Proposals for all new undergraduate modules within approved degrees, and joint programs with other institutions, regardless of whether the University will be applying for provincial funding, require review and approval by Western's Senate and must subsequently be approved by the Quality Council.

As part of the development of a new joint program or inter-institutional programs, the IQAPs of all the participating institutions granting the degree should be followed. See the [Quality Council's guidance](#) for elements to consider in the development and approval of joint programs.

To be done efficiently and effectively, the new program proposal process requires a participatory and transparent approach, involving program faculty, staff, and students (where applicable), documentation of how diverse voices and perspectives were obtained in a consultative phase, and how they were taken into account in the development of the resulting proposal. It is expected that academic units will gather relevant stakeholder data from multiple sources to examine need, demand and program viability. For instance, data sources may include:

- Government or industry reports
- Scholarly literature and environmental scans
- Survey/focus group data (e.g., from workplace partners or prospective students)
- Departmental and institutional data (data from externally validated instruments)
- A market insight report stemming from analysis provided by [Lightcast](#) and other related tools – this can be initiated by contacting the Office of Academic Quality and Enhancement (OAQE).

Support with the development of the program proposal, and the resulting report can be procured through the OAQE and/or the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL).

Following completion of the program proposal, the academic unit will be asked to provide names of prospective external reviewers and undergo an external review. More information about this phase of the process may be shared following the submission and review of the program proposal brief. Similarly, if the module (or series of modules) consist(s) of a new program of study that will necessitate funding approval from the Ministry, a short list of additional items will need to be considered and included with the program proposal submission (see Appendix B).

Any questions can be directed to the OAQE at: [OAQE@uwo.ca](mailto:OAQE@uwo.ca). For questions about the calendar copy or the governance process for proposals, contact the Secretariat at: [academic\\_submissions@uwo.ca](mailto:academic_submissions@uwo.ca).

Proposals must be submitted by the Dean's Office as an MS Word document using Arial 12-point font to the Secretariat at [academic\\_submissions@uwo.ca](mailto:academic_submissions@uwo.ca). The Secretariat provides support for determining the appropriate governance pathway.

Please submit final version to the University Secretariat in **WORD format** in Arial 12-point font

# New Undergraduate Program Proposal Template

**Name of the Program/ Certificate:** Certificate in Religious and Cultural Diversity

**Degree:** *Certificate*

**Academic Unit:** Department of Religious Studies

**Faculty / School / Affiliate University College:** King's University College.

**Anticipated Year of Introduction:** September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026

**Primary Contact:** Dr. Josephine Gemson, Interim Associate Academic Dean, King's University College, [associate.dean@kings.uwo.ca](mailto:associate.dean@kings.uwo.ca)

**Department/Program Contact:** Dr. Chaya Halberstam, Chair, Department of Religious Studies, King's University College, [chaya.halberstam@uwo.ca](mailto:chaya.halberstam@uwo.ca)

**Education Policy Committee (EPC) Approval Date** (or equivalent committee): *List the EPC and approval date. For joint, combined, or shared programs, EPC approval is required from all participating Faculties. Please also include any other bodies that have approved the proposal.*

**New Courses:** Does this proposal contain courses that have not yet been approved by the Subcommittee on Undergraduate Academic Courses (SOC)? Please note that courses must be approved by SOC before a new program proposal may proceed to SUPR\_U.

- No
- Yes

**Format for Future Cyclical Reviews** (check appropriate option)

- Stand alone – will be reviewed independently of other programs
- Incorporated – will be reviewed as part of an existing program

**New Calendar Copy** (check the box below to confirm)

- New calendar copy for the proposed program has been included as part of item 2.7

**Consultation Process** (check the box below to confirm)

Officially, consultation takes place between Deans' and Departmental offices. Initial consultation may have taken place between Faculties and Departments at Western and

the Affiliated University Colleges, the relevant University Library, Education Policy Committees (or equivalent bodies), other institutions (if relevant to the proposal), and the Registrar's Office. However, the responsibility for a proposal rests with the Office of the Dean.

The Office of the Dean will send a copy of the proposal to the relevant Associate Deans Academic (or equivalent) and Department Chairs of other faculties. They will have 30 days from the date the proposal is received to comment. Departments are encouraged to think broadly about consultation and to consult all other Departments/Faculties, including interdisciplinary programs offered between Departments/Faculties, that may be impacted by the proposal.

If, in the view of SUPR-U or ACA, a proposal has not had sufficient consultation, the proposal will be referred back to the Faculty, School or Affiliated University College until this has been done.

- Consultation with relevant Department Chairs and Deans has taken place (as part of item 1.2.2).
- A final version of this proposal has been shared with the OAQE ahead of submission.
- Confirmation that budget and resource planning have been completed.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Description and Rationale

#### 1.1.1 Provide a description of the proposed program.

The Certificate in Religious & Cultural Diversity equips students pursuing degrees in any human-centred profession--Law, Business, Healthcare, Social Work, Psychology, Education, Public Policy -- with a working knowledge of the beliefs and practices within a variety of religious and cultural traditions. As part of the University's commitment to the "discovery and application of knowledge," the Certificate will equip students with a deep knowledge of diverse religious and cultural practices so that they can directly apply this knowledge to their interactions with individuals throughout Canada's uniquely multicultural landscape, as well as with their contacts throughout the world. Students will also acquire the basic research skills to learn more about religious and cultural practices they have not encountered yet as undergraduates and to continue to expand their learning throughout their professional lives.

#### 1.1.2 What has led to the proposal of this program (e.g., recommendation from a program review, evolution of the discipline, result of monitoring a new program, change in faculty expertise, student demand, efficiencies, etc.)?

Students in community placements in various programs have been receiving feedback that while excelling in many areas of their work, they were not ready to encounter clients of different religious/cultural backgrounds and meet their needs. The Religious Studies department sought to address this concern by creating a simple but critical certificate program that could be added to virtually any other major or specialization to address this need.

A program like this Certificate is not offered anywhere on the Western campus. While degrees in World Religions are available at King's and Huron, these are majors and minors, which are more difficult to add on to a demanding program. In addition, these diplomas do not necessarily emphasize their applied significance to a wide variety of professions. As a program with a 3.0 requirement and a credential that can be recognized in a variety of sectors, we believe this certificate program will uniquely appeal to students across the Western campuses.

Current research shows that there is robust student demand for religious and cultural literacy in the human-centred professions and that even top universities are currently not providing adequate training in this area to their students. While some professions and non-governmental organizations provide one- to three-day workshops in religious and cultural diversity, they do not deliver the deeper knowledge of global religions and diverse cultures that an undergraduate degree can provide. The Certificate in Religious & Cultural Diversity offers crucial knowledge, skill sets, and credentials for creating true equity and inclusion in our professions and communities of care.

#### 1.1.3 Describe what evidence there is of substantial demand or need for a new program in this area at this University (e.g., student demand and career expectations, social need, new opportunity) and what other grounds there are to justify introducing this program.

Current research shows that there is growing demand for religious and cultural literacy in the human-centred professions and that even top universities are currently not providing adequate training in this area to their students. While some professions and non-governmental

organizations provide one- to three-day workshops in religious and cultural diversity, they do not deliver the deeper knowledge of global religions and diverse cultures that an undergraduate degree can provide. The Certificate in Religious & Cultural Diversity aims to get ahead of the problems that religious ignorance, fear, and hatred create by offering crucial knowledge, skill sets, and credentials for creating true equity and inclusion in our professional sectors and communities of care. King's University College at Western University will be a leader in the province, and indeed the nation, in offering this credential.

At this moment, religious diversity is most often overlooked or set aside in programs and trainings that aim for inclusivity in the human-centred professions. The Registered Nurses Association of Ontario, for example, relegates Cultural and Religious diversity to a section in their handbook titled "Thorny Issues" (Patrick and Chan, 2022). Despite the perception of a predominantly secular society since at least the 1950s, the 21<sup>st</sup> century has brought with it an increased awareness that multiculturalism is not just about different styles of food and dress but distinct (and diverse) worldviews. Therefore, recent policy and research have emphasized that knowledge related to diverse religious and secular beliefs are significant professional tools for teachers, healthcare workers, social services professionals, and more (Ubani, 2021). Issues such as immigration, race and gender identification, and indigenous reconciliation cannot be isolated but must be seen through an intersectional lens that includes religion.

A recent student-run conference on Religious Literacy in International Relations attracted over 300 people, and covered the professional areas of Security Operations, International Business, Humanitarian Aid, and Conflict Resolution. It resulted in broad consensus on the following issues:

1. "the need for building a more developed knowledge of religion";
2. That "religious illiteracy generates, aggravates, and perpetuates conflict and blocks productivity, creativity, sustainability, and profitability"; and
3. That "the development of religious literacy is a requirement for informed, thoughtful, engaged citizens of the university and the world" (Prodromou et.al., 2018)

Therefore, the awareness of the centrality of religious and cultural knowledge in a vast array of sectors is slowly entering the public sphere, and demand for such knowledge will only grow in the coming decades.

#### Works Cited:

- Patrick, M.; Chan, W.Y.A. "Can I Keep My Religious Identity and Be a Professional? Evaluating the Presence of Religious Literacy in Education, Nursing, and Social Work Professional Programs across Canada." *Educ.Sci.* **2022**, *12*,543. [https:// doi.org/10.3390/educsci12080543](https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci12080543)
- Prodromou, Elizabeth H., Clare D. Gooding, and Sasha Lipton Galbraith. "Approaching Religious Literacy in International Affairs: A Conference Report." *The Review of Faith & International Affairs* 16.1 (2018): 1-15.

Ubani, M. (2021). "Chapter 9 Religious Literacy as a 21st Century Skill for All Teachers". In *Good Teachers for Tomorrow's Schools*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill.  
[https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004465008\\_010](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004465008_010)

- 1.1.3.1 If appropriate, comment on the relevance of the proposed module to graduate employment prospects, i.e., if there is an established career path for graduates of this module.

This module is intended to supplement other programs and the career paths they entail. Many of our students at King's go on to careers in Social Work, Psychology, Death and Bereavement services, NGO/nonprofit work, Law Enforcement/Legal Services, Management and Marketing, and teaching. The Certificate in Religious and Cultural Diversity will provide necessary skills for understanding the diversity inherent in any workplace—far beyond any one-day or multi-day corporate training—and make students more competitive as they enter a challenging job market.

Lightcast data was difficult to compile because this certificate is not meant, in and of itself, to lead to a career, but rather to enhance and supplement career readiness with a supplementary qualification. However, the data still showed substantial growth in demand for a qualification in religious and cultural diversity: in 2019 and 2020, the average number of monthly job postings across the country that included key words related to religious diversity was 110; in 2024, it is 590. Our instinct that this qualification would supplement other human centred professions was proven correct: the top three job titles that included key words in religious diversity were Support Workers, Public Health Nurses, and Retail Store Managers, and the top three Specialized Skills were Social Work (23%), Mental Health (20%) and Conflict Resolution (14%).

- 1.1.4 Identify whether there are similar programs at other universities in the province which would duplicate or compete with the proposed program. If applicable, 1) What differentiates the proposed program from other related programs? 2) Are there programs in the disciplinary area that could feed into the proposed program?

The King's at Western University Certificate in Religious and Cultural Diversity would be the **first and as yet only** certificate program in diverse religions in Ontario. Several other universities around Ontario offer minors in religious studies, but the advantage of a certificate program is its appearance on the student's diploma and its relatively lighter course load, giving access to those students pursuing demanding degrees to obtain this credential.

- 1.1.5 Does the program require accreditation by an external body? If so, explain the process by which this accreditation would be performed.

N/A

- 1.1.6 What are the prospective effects of the proposed program on the involved academic units and faculties (e.g., teaching loads)?

As the Certificate is designed around existing courses in the Religious Studies department, it should have no significant effect on faculty teaching loads. The certificate organizes and

sequences already existing courses to help students efficiently attain diverse knowledge of diverse traditions in the fewest number of courses.

1.1.7 What are the prospective effects of the proposed program on other programs (e.g., enrolments, use of resources)?

This certificate's design and content can supplement any and all programs at UWO. Therefore, the certificate may relieve other programs of the growing need to provide their own religious diversity modules, relying on our strengths in this area.

1.1.8 Identify unique curriculum, program innovations, creative components, or significant high impact practices both in and outside of the classroom (e.g., experiential or community-engaged learning, work-integrated-learning, internships).

King's is known for its small class sizes and personal connections between professors, academic advisors, and students. The certificate, even as it expands, will ensure that students have in-person and focused classroom experiences to discuss and explore their questions and presumptions about religious traditions, including many of the questions they have been afraid to ask in other forums. In addition, King's hosts the extremely successful and longstanding community program London Interfaith Peace Camp which runs for one week every summer. King's students assist the peace camp throughout the winter term and summer. Religious Studies will work with Student Affairs to place interested Certificate-program members as interns for the Peace Camp. Religious Studies will also work closely with Social Work to help make sure that students enrolled in the Certificate are given placements that will enrich their experience of multifaith and multicultural environments.

## 1.2 Method for New Program Proposal

1.2.1 Describe how the new program proposal was developed (e.g., overview of timelines, how the analysis of demand and feasibility took place). This program was developed through consultation with students and academic advising staff. While students have the Religion & Society minor available to them already, they expressed a desire for a credential that was (a) slightly less onerous than a 4.0 course load, as many of them are already carrying double majors; and (b) visible on their diploma as a credential related to their qualifications for various career trajectories.

1.2.2 Describe how the consultation process was undertaken and, using the table below, include a list with the names and roles of the persons and/or groups consulted (e.g., program partners, academic leaders, Office of Indigenous Initiatives). Please also indicate the date the consultation was sent to, and received from, the parties (i.e., when they received the completed version of the proposal). **TBD post EPC approval**

Name	Role	Date Sent	Response received (note if no response was received)


1.2.2.1 Summarize any feedback, concerns and/or changes that have resulted from the consultations. If no feedback was received, please note this.

## 2. EVALUATION CRITERIA

### 2.1 Objectives of the program (IQAP 2.1.3.1)

[This link](#) takes you to Religious Studies recent IQAP self-study which includes a full description and analysis of modules in Religion and Society & World Religions and Cultures. This certificate program is a lighter, more condensed version of these programs and share most of their objectives and outcomes.

Describe:

2.1.1 the program’s objectives (see [Definition](#)).

1. To teach undergraduate students basic literacy in religious diversity.
2. To provide students opportunities to engage in dialogue with one another on difficult and often avoided topics related to religion, mediated by experts in the field.
3. To offer deep knowledge of at least three religious and cultural traditions, including the historical, cultural, and interpretive diversity within these traditions.
4. To provide opportunities for students studying other fields of knowledge to critically reflect on how religion is reflected in and shapes the area that they are studying.
5. To provide opportunities for students in community placements to critically reflect on their work with individuals from diverse religious backgrounds
6. To develop sensitivity towards and appreciation of a variety of religious beliefs and practices.

2.1.2 the degree nomenclature given the program’s objectives.

The degree is named “Religious and Cultural Diversity” to emphasize that students obtain a credential that exposes them to diverse religious traditions and the ways religion and culture are intertwined.

2.1.3 the consistency of the program’s objectives with Western’s mission, values, strategic priorities (e.g., Towards 150, and the Indigenous Strategic Plan), and academic plans.

The certificate’s objectives align most closely with Western’s strategic priority of engaging the world. King’s offers unique programming to enhance this engagement through education in religious diversity. King’s new strategic plan emphasizes a commitment to inclusion and equity, and our vision asks us to develop “ethically grounded changemakers” as part of the mission of the Catholic intellectual tradition. We are called to recognize that when the world is perceived only through our own eyes, we render the experiences and values of others invisible—or, at worst, colonize them and remake them in our own image, to fit our own aims and priorities. To

truly engage the world and make change in ethically-grounded ways entails relativizing one's place in the world among many others and understanding the limits of our knowledge and experience. The knowledge of religious and cultural diversity that our certificate offers teaches students to see difference and diversity as strengths rather than an obstacle to be overcome. The certificate offers a small taste of the vast diversity of religious and cultural traditions found across the globe; it also provides students with the skills to continue learning as they encounter new people and travel to new places. It will allow graduates to continue to engage in dialogue across difference throughout their lifetimes.

## **2.2 Program Requirements (IQAP 2.1.3.2)**

Describe:

2.2.1 the program's structure and the requirements to meet its objectives and program-level learning outcomes.


The following learning outcomes have been organized according to the OCAV categories in expectations for undergraduate degrees: (i) Depth and Breadth of Knowledge; (ii) Knowledge of Methodologies; (iii) Application of Knowledge; (iv) Communication Skills; and (v) Awareness of Limits of Knowledge.

Accordingly, students who complete this certificate will:

1. Recall accurate knowledge about at least three (3) religious traditions and expressions (Depth and Breadth)
2. Recognize the internal diversity within religious traditions (Depth and Breadth)
3. Explain how religious beliefs and practices are integrated into the experiences and histories of individuals, communities, nations, and regions (Knowledge of Methodologies)
4. Interpret how religious expressions make use of cultural symbols and artistic representations of their times and contexts (Knowledge of Methodologies)
5. Distinguish confessional or prescriptive statements made by religions from descriptive or analytical statements made about religions (Knowledge of Methodologies)
6. Discern ethical and political issues related to religion in public dialogue and debate (Application of Knowledge)
7. Recognize the dominant religious and cultural worldview of your region (e.g., North America) and the viability of religious subcultures (Application of Knowledge, Awareness of Limits of Knowledge)
8. Apply knowledge of multiple religious traditions to effectively navigate religious diversity, address religious intolerance, and promote pluralistic understanding (Application of Knowledge, Communication Skills)

2.2.1.1 How many new courses will be developed in support of the proposed program? How many courses in the proposed program are already being offered? What are the implications of the proposed program for the instructional load of the academic unit(s)? Please append to the proposal the descriptions of any new courses to be introduced.

All courses on the certificate's proposed calendar copy are already offered annually by the Religious Studies department thus it should have no additional instructional load of any academic units. When we are able to expand course offerings, we will be looking first and foremost to add two courses in indigenous religions, North American and Global.

2.2.1.2 Using a curriculum mapping exercise (to be attached as an appendix) , how do the proposed courses map across the proposed program's learning outcomes?

A [curriculum map](#) was developed for Religion and Society's last IQAP review in 2019. As a more condensed version of the Religion and Society major, the curriculum map can serve this certificate program as well.

2.2.1.3 Provide a clear rationale for program length that ensures that students can complete the program-level learning outcomes and requirements within the proposed time period.

The certificate should be completed concurrently with an undergraduate degree therefore the program length is dependent upon the student's anticipated degree graduation date and whether they have met the program requirements to confer the certificate.

2.2.2 the program's structure, requirements, and program learning outcomes in relation to the [Western Degree Outcomes](#).

2.2.2.1 Use the following Learning Outcome Table to facilitate alignment of program learning outcomes, Western degree outcomes and likely courses addressing each.

Western Degree Outcomes	Program Learning Outcomes	How does the program support the achievement of each outcome (e.g., via which courses, other learning experiences)	How does the program plan to evaluate the achievement of each outcome (e.g., rough sense of types of assessments, assignments, milestones)
Knowledge	PLO 1, PLO 2, PLO 3, PLO 7	All courses provide knowledge	In person and take home exams; quizzes
Literacies and Interdisciplinarity	PLO 1, PLO 2, PLO 3, PLO 4, PLO 5, PLO 6, PLO 7	All courses; cross listed courses	In person and take home exams; short assignments; essays; assignments in cross-listed classes

Communication	PLO 2, PLO 3, PLO 8	Small-class learning experiences	Class presentations; Respectful participation and discussion in class
Resilience and Life-Long Learning	PLO 7, PLO 5, PLO 6	Professor-student relationships and mentoring	Capstone projects; summative assessments
Global and Community Engagement	PLO 6, PLO 7, PLO 8	Integration with King's Interfaith Peace Camp; integrated work with religious studies student club	Research essays; experiential coursework
Critical Inquiry and Creative Thinking	PLO 3, PLO 4, PLO 5, PLO 6, PLO 7	All courses focus on critical inquiry and creative thinking	Essays, long-answer exam questions; take-home exams; reflection & journaling assignments
Professionalism and Ethical Conduct	PLO 8	Most religious studies (which have course caps of 40 and below).	Respectful participation and discussion in class; oral exams; class presentations; study abroad trips

2.2.3 the proposed mode(s) of delivery (e.g., classroom format, online, blended, community-engaged learning, problem-based, compressed part-time, multi-campus, inter-institutional) to facilitate students' successful completion of the program-level learning outcomes.

Most course work will be completed in-person on King's University College campus concurrently with their undergraduate degree. Some courses are offered online to accommodate students' needs.

2.2.4 the ways in which the curriculum addresses the current state of the discipline or area of study.

We are in a time of rising hate crimes related to Islamophobia and antisemitism, alongside rhetoric that slanders cultural minority groups as committing barbaric acts. We have the tools within our university system to rise to these challenging times, but they are little-known and little-utilized. The Religious Studies department at King's, a Catholic college committed to equity and inclusion, is **uniquely** positioned within the UWO ecosystem to dispel misinformation and hate towards religious and cultural groups by *teaching about them*. We feel compelled at this moment to offer a program that promotes sensitivity to a variety of religious cultures and an appreciation for the variety of beliefs and practices within our multicultural nation. We recognize that career-oriented undergraduates are not likely to choose religious studies as their primary field of study unless they imagine somewhat niche career paths in religious education or the clergy. But as a Religious Studies department that is deeply committed to religious diversity and critical studies, we play a vital role in university education, especially in the midst of our cultural moment of polarization and divisiveness.

2.2.5 how the program will embed the principles below into its design, learning outcomes, procedures and operations. ?

- Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Antiracism
  - The entire certificate is centred on teaching diverse beliefs and traditions. We believe the certificate will attract a diverse student population and that classrooms will provide safe spaces to engage in dialogue across difference. King's full time Religious Studies faculty is racially and culturally diverse as well, providing students with leaders and mentors with whom they can identify.
- Decolonization and Indigenization; and
  - We currently offer two courses that engage decolonization explicitly, while many other deal with the issues of empire, colonialism, and resistance. We plan to introduce, when we are able, at least two courses in indigenous religions. Until then, the department chair has been accepting credits in Indigenous Studies to fulfil modular requirements.
- Accessibility.
  - The certificate program will consist of courses that meet the highest standards for accessibility in higher education.

2.2.6 where appropriate, any special missions and mandates, and student populations that are being encouraged by governments, institutions, and others.

As articulated in its founding documents, King's University College has a special mission in Theology and Religious Studies that is integral to its status as a Catholic university. It is our mandate to maintain a tradition of religious literacy within the university and the larger London community.

### **2.3 Assessment of teaching and learning (IQAP 2.1.3.4)**

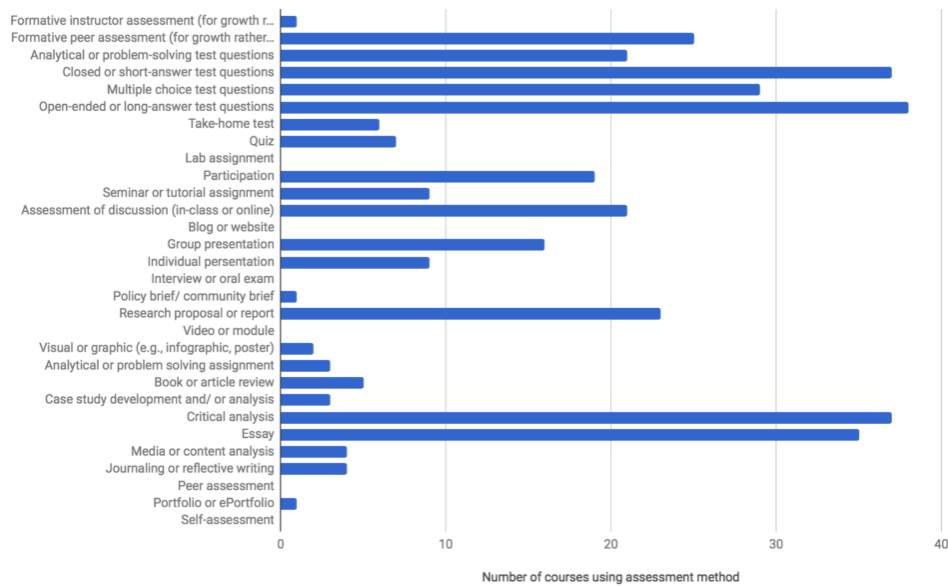
*NOTE: In this section, the proposal should make a clear distinction between program-level learning outcomes, program objectives, and degree-level expectations. Additionally, programs should ensure that the plans for monitoring and assessing student achievement provide an assessment of students currently enrolled as well as post-graduation metrics. Please [see Guidance on Assessment of Teaching and Learning](#) for advice from the Appraisal Committee on how to satisfy these criteria.*

Describe:

2.3.1 the methods for assessing student achievement of the program-level learning outcomes and the Western Degree Outcomes; and

2.3.1.1 Expanding on the curriculum map provided for 2.2.1.2, how do assessment methods map across courses?

Summary: number of courses using each assessment method



(Details are found in the Religious Studies IQAP self-study)

### 2.3.2 the program's plans to monitor and assess:

- i. the overall quality and sustainability of the program;
  - a) The certificate in Religious and Cultural Diversity will be included in IQAP reviews, including an upcoming one within the next 3 years.
  - b) Modular enrolment will be reviewed by the chair and the dean's office on a yearly basis
- ii. whether the program is achieving in practice its proposed objectives;
  - a) Because we aim to attach this program to other degree-granting programs, we will follow up with those departments (e.g., Social Work) to receive feedback from them and the organizations within which they have placed our students
  - b) We will keep a list of alumni of the program and reach out to them yearly to ask about the role the certificate has played in their career / graduate programs
- iii. whether its students are achieving the program-level learning outcomes; and
  - a) Each student is required to take one 3000+ level course. The chair will work with instructors of upper-year courses to integrate assessments of program outcomes into these courses
- iv. how the resulting information will be documented and subsequently used to inform continuous program improvement.
  - a) Summaries of these data collected will be documented to the chair and sent to the dean's office annually.

## 2.4 Admission Requirements (IQAP 2.1.3.5)

Describe:

- 2.4.1 the program's admission, progression, and graduation requirements given the program's objectives and program-level learning outcomes.

Admissions criteria for the Certificate in Religious and Cultural Diversity is aligned with the other Certificate programs offered at King's University College, "Completion of first year requirements with a minimum cumulative average of 65%". Given the graduation requirements of the Certificate indicate students must achieve a minimum cumulative average of 65% on the 3.0 courses, the admissions criteria mirror what is required for students to successfully complete this credential.

- 2.4.2 alternative requirements for admission into the undergraduate program, if applicable (e.g., minimum grade point average, additional languages, or portfolios, and how the program recognizes prior work or learning experience).

N/A

## 2.5 Resources (IQAP 2.1.2.6)

Given the program's planned / anticipated class sizes and cohorts as well as its program-level learning outcomes:

- 2.5.1 Describe the projected program enrolment at initial offering and over the next 5 years (full-time/part-time and domestic/international, as applicable). Please use the following table as a starting point. Expand to capture sub-groups as applicable. Describe any forecasted net gains in enrolment.

Proposed Enrolment	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Program Year 1 (if applicable)	0	0	0	0	0
Program Year 2	5	8	10	12	15
Program Year 3	5	10	12	15	18
Program Year 4	2	8	10	12	15
Annual Ongoing	12	21	28	34	42
Anticipated # of completions	2	8	10	12	15

2.5.1.1 What plans are in place regarding marketing and recruitment? The chair has met with the King's recruitment team to inform them about this credential and to discuss how to persuade high school students of its desirability and utility. The chair has also informed

students, academic advisors, and other department chairs of the certificate program to get word-of-mouth publicity.

- 2.5.2 Provide evidence of participation of a sufficient number and quality of core faculty who are competent to teach and/or supervise in and achieve the goals of the program and foster the appropriate academic environment (NOTE: *It may be helpful to create a table or map detailing faculty teaching assignments*).

Core faculty include:

Dr. Carolyn Chau – Catholic Studies; Moral Theology

Dr. Chaya Halberstam – Jewish Studies; Biblical Studies

Dr. Gyongy Hegedus – Jewish Studies; Islamic Studies; Philosophy of Religion

Dr. JK Kato – Eastern Religions; Hybrid Religious Identities; Biblical Studies

Dr. Mahdi Tourage – Islamic Studies; Gender & Sexuality; Sociology of Religion

(See self-study for further details)

- 2.5.3 If applicable, discuss and/or explain the role and approximate percentage of adjunct/part-time faculty/limited term appointments used in the delivery of the program, including plans to ensure the sustainability of the program and the quality of the student experience.

Religious Studies has a dedicated group of long-serving sessional faculty who have become integral to our program delivery. They are highly qualified, excellent teachers and consistently receive excellent evaluations by students. They include:

Mr. Brett Babbington – School Placement Coordinator; Experiential Learning Coordinator

Dr. Charles Burnetts – Religious Studies and Popular Culture

Dr. Andrew Knight-Messenger – Biblical Studies; Jewish Studies; New Religious Movements

Dr. Jonathan Marsh – Philosophy of Religion

Ms. Corinne Walsh – Religious Ethics; Marriage & Family

- 2.5.4 If applicable, describe the provision of supervision of experiential learning opportunities (e.g., Internships, community-engaged learning, capstone projects or theses). We are working with Social Justice and Peace as well as Social Work to coordinate community-engaged experiences. Once we attain some success in enrolment in this certificate program, we intend to create a capstone course on religious diversity.

- 2.5.5 Describe the administrative unit's planned use of existing human, physical and financial resources, including implications for other existing programs at the university.

The creation of a certificate program will create no additional strain on any college resources. Advising and support staff have embraced the creation of this program and are looking forward to aiding in its success.

- 2.5.6 Provide evidence that there are adequate resources to sustain the quality of scholarship and research activities produced by students as well as their wellbeing, including library support, information technology support, laboratory access, and academic counselling.

The certificate program expands our current offerings by creating an easier pathway for students to access our program. Current resourcing that is already in place for our various other programs will suffice for this certificate as well. See IQAP Self Study for further details.

- 2.5.7 Outline the parameters necessary for ongoing program sustainability (e.g., average annual enrolments necessary before consideration of program sunseting). In other words, at what threshold would it no longer be viable to offer this program (e.g., Any fewer than X # of students enrolled in the module over a period of three years)? After a requisite period to allow for program growth, enrolments lower than 20 students per year could indicate that the program has failed to catch on among students.
- 2.5.8 Provide evidence of additional institutional resource commitments to support the program in step with its ongoing implementation, if necessary. N/A

## **2.6 Quality and other indicators (IQAP 2.1.3.8)**

*NOTE: As required by the Quality Council, this section is distinguished from Section 2.5.2 in its focus on the quality of the faculty and their capacity to ensure the intellectual quality of the student experience, whereas Section 2.5.2 addresses whether sufficient numbers of core faculty are available to cover the program's teaching/supervision duties.*

- 2.6.1 Provide evidence of the quality of the faculty (e.g., qualifications, funding, honours, awards, research, innovation, and scholarly record; appropriateness of collective faculty expertise to contribute substantively to the program and commitment to student mentoring). See [IQAP Self-Study](#), p. 36 ff.
- 2.6.2 Provide any other evidence that the program and faculty will ensure the intellectual quality of the student experience.

## **2.7 Provide new calendar copy for the proposed program.**

CERTIFICATE IN RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Admission Requirements

Completion of first year requirements with a minimum cumulative average of 65%.

Module / Program Information

## **Program Requirements**

To qualify for the Certificate in Religious and Cultural Diversity, students must achieve an overall average of 65% in the following 3.0 courses:

**1.5 courses** normally taken in second year: Religious Studies 2200F/G, Religious Studies 2203F/G, Religious Studies 2204F/G\*.

**1.5 additional courses** in Religious Studies at the 2100-level or above.

NOTE: It is strongly recommended that students take a 0.5 course in Religious Studies/Jewish Studies (King's/Huron campuses); 0.5 course in Religious Studies/Islamic Studies (King's/Huron campuses); and a 0.5 course in Catholic Studies (King's/St. Peter's Seminary) to fulfill the '1.5 additional courses in Religious Studies' requirement.

Courses in Indigenous Studies or East Asian / Asian Studies may be substituted with permission of the Chair.

\* This module requires Religious Studies 2203F/G, which has Religious Studies 1023E as an antirequisite. Students who have completed Religious Studies 1023E must substitute an alternate 0.5 course in Religious Studies at the 2100 level.

## Appendix A

This section offers broad guidelines to aid in providing responses required as part of the self-study. For a “Glossary of Terms” used in section 2.2.5, please visit Western’s Office of EDI website by [click here](#).

### 2.2 Program Requirements (IQAP 2.1.3.2)

NOTE<sup>1</sup>: *Ensure that the proposal makes a clear distinction between program objectives and program-level learning outcomes. Guidance on program objectives and program-level learning outcomes, including examples, is available [here](#). It may be helpful to include a table that maps program requirements (i.e., courses, experiential education requirements, theses or major research projects) to program objectives and program-level learning outcomes.*

#### 2.2.1 Description and Alignment of the Learning Outcomes

Below is a list of the learning outcomes of a program in the context of the [Western Degree Outcomes](#).

- Knowledge
- Literacies and Interdisciplinarity
- Communication
- Resilience and Life-Long Learning
- Global and Community Engagement
- Critical Inquiry and Creative Thinking
- Professionalism and Ethical Conduct

Under each heading above, describe the intended learning outcomes and experiences, giving specific examples, where possible; describe how the program addresses the learning objectives; for example, describe how learning objectives are met through formal course work, independent research, practicum and internship training, teaching and research assistantships, professional development workshops, etc.

2.2.1.1 Curriculum Mapping Support can be procured through the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL). The CTL’s curriculum team will help set up the mapping process and guide the program through the collection, analysis and interpretation of the resulting data.



## Appendix B

If the module (or series of modules) consist(s) of a new program of study that will necessitate funding approval from the Ministry, the following list of additional items will need to be considered and included with the program proposal submission.

To conform with the Ministry of Colleges and Universities' program funding approval processes, the following items are equally to be considered and included as an Appendix to the new program proposal submission. These items (in concert with the content of the proposal in this template) aim to align with the themes examined by the ministry staff in their assessment of each submission.

### Labour Market Demand:

- Summarize any reports from independent organizations that support the demand for the proposed program and the graduates that it would produce.
- Solicit and include letters of support for the program from industry.
- List the types of occupations that the graduates would likely go into.

### Program Impact

- Analyze and report the distribution of, and demand for, similar programs in Ontario.

### Experiential Learning

- Solicit and include letters of support for the program from prospective work-integrated learning, internship and/or placement partners (if applicable).
  - o Provide evidence of sufficient placement opportunities (if applicable).

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**Report to: Academic Council**

**Report from: Robert Ventresca, President (Interim)**

**Date: October 2025**

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I am pleased to share some updates since my last written report in September — milestones that reflect the collective effort and spirit of our community.

**Convocation**

As we prepare to celebrate **Fall Convocation**, we extend heartfelt thanks to the entire King's community for the support, guidance, and encouragement you've offered our graduating students throughout their academic journey. Their success reflects both their perseverance and the dedication of our faculty, staff, and community members across the university.

The Fall 2025 Convocation Ceremony will take place on **Thursday, October 23 at 3:00 p.m.** at **Canada Life Place** in downtown London. Following the ceremony, King's will host a **Graduation Social** from **5:00 to 7:00 p.m.** on the **Mezzanine level of Covent Garden Market**, just across the street. All members of the King's community are warmly invited to join this informal celebration to congratulate graduates and connect with their families and peers.

This fall, **216 King's graduates** are set to cross the stage. Here's the program breakdown:

**BA (3-Year) Cross-Disciplinary: 9**

**BMOS:**

- Finance & Administration: 18
- Accounting: 6
- Organizational & Human Resources, Global Commerce: (all 4 or fewer graduates each)

**BA / BA Honours / Specialization (4-Year):**

- Economics: 23
- Financial Economics: 21
- Psychology: 20
- Criminology: 17
- Political Science, International Relations (PIR): 9
- Sociology: 13
- Childhood & Youth Studies: 5
- Social Justice & Peace Studies, Disability Studies, English, Finance, French, History, Human Rights, Philosophy, Thanatology (all 4 or fewer graduates each)

**Graduate & Professional Programs:**

- Master of Theological Studies (MTS): 2
  - Social Work (MSW/BSW): 44
-

We encourage everyone to join us in celebrating our graduates' achievements. Your support has made a meaningful difference in their journey. For more information, please visit the Fall Convocation [webpage](#).

### **Veritas Lecture Series 2025-2026**

The Veritas Lecture Series features distinguished speakers addressing the interplay between the intellectual and religious dimensions of our university's mission of service. Inspired by the theme for the Jubilee Year, *Pilgrims of Hope*, these presentations will offer thoughtful reflections on the challenges we face today and how hope, learning, and belief can help us respond with purpose and compassion.

Thank you to the **Mission, Integration and Inclusion Committee**, **Ann Hoffer**, and **Cynthia Lessard** who helped organize the President's Lecture on Truth and Reconciliation held September 22 featuring Dr. **Niigaan Sinclair**, Professor, Department of Indigenous Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Manitoba who provided a lecture on "*Not the right thing to do, the only thing to do: How Indigenous Education Will Save the World*". Sincere thanks to Adrienne Co-Dyre and her team for their support in acquiring 10 copies of *Wînipêk: Visions of Canada from an Indigenous Centre*. Six of these have been catalogued and are now available in the library collection.

The next lecture features **Dr. Cory Labrecque**, Professor, Vice-Dean of Studies, Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies, Laval University on "*Walking Together in the Age of Artificial Intelligence: Relationality, Community, and the Culture of Encounter*". This lecture will occur on November 20 at 5:30pm in the Joanne and Peter Kenny Theatre. Guests are invited to make a voluntary donation to St. Joe's Café as part of the evening.

### **Affiliation Discussions**

The parties continue to meet to discuss admissions averages, graduation rates, and clarification of services included under affiliation fee. There is substantial agreement on maintaining most elements of the current affiliation agreement, with agreement on a temporarily attenuated affiliation fee rate. The parties are confident that we are close to finalizing the new affiliation agreement.

### **Update from the Board**

As I emphasized in September, transparency is essential as we navigate our financial challenges. Our [audited financial statements](#), which were approved by the Board earlier this month, are available and provide a clear picture of where we stand today. Sharing these statements is part of my commitment to ensuring we move forward with a shared understanding of both our challenges and our opportunities. Academic Council requested information in the summer that became available with the audited financial statements. Planning and Priorities will review these materials and report back to Council.

### **Coffee and Conversations with Rob**

To create more opportunities for dialogue, I am reintroducing **Coffee and Conversation with Rob**—informal gatherings for us to connect over coffee, share what's on your mind, and reflect

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on where our community is headed, I invite you to join me in my office (DL 216) from **2:30–3:30 p.m.** on **November 13**, and **December 11**. Openness is about sharing information as well as listening and learning from one another, and coffee chats are one way I hope to continue that dialogue.

### **Community Assembly**

All employees are invited to our [Fall Community Assembly](#) on November 4, 11:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. in LH105 where I will provide more details on our approach to achieving financial sustainability.

### **Feast of Christ the King: Celebrating Our Rich History**

*Sunday November 23, 10:00 a.m., The Chapel at Windermere on the Mount, 1486 Richmond St, London, ON N6G 2M3*

In celebration and thanksgiving for the life of the College, all are invited to Mass for the Feast of Christ the King—a solemnity that proclaims Christ’s reign of love, justice, and peace over all creation, and reminds us to place our lives in His service. Bishop Ronald P. Fabbro, CSB, will preside. Faculty, staff, and board members are invited to join the academic procession, which will gather at 9:30 a.m.

### **Student Excellence Awards: Celebrating Our Students**

*Sunday November 23, 12:00 p.m., Labatt Hall 105*

Please join us as we celebrate our students’ accomplishments at the Student Awards Ceremony. This event recognizes students for their hard work and achievements, and the generous donors who support their success. The ceremony is an inspiring opportunity to witness firsthand the impact King’s has on student lives and futures, thanks to our supportive community. All are welcome to attend.

### **Homecoming**

At Homecoming, we welcomed alumni back to campus and were reminded of the strength and generosity of spirit that define the King’s community. The dinner was especially inspiring, as our Alumni Award recipients and reunion celebrants reflected on the lasting impact of their King’s education. These moments remind us that every member of this community contributes to stories of success that reach far beyond our campus. Together, we are preparing graduates who make a difference in the world.

Respectfully submitted,



Dr. Robert Ventresca  
President (Interim) and Professor  
King’s University College

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**Report to:** Academic Council

**From:** Strategic Enrolment Management Committee Meeting  
(SEM)

**Date:** October 8, 2025

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The Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM) Committee met on October 2, 2025, to review updates on enrolment performance, international admissions, recruitment initiatives, and retention planning. Key topics included upcoming reporting timelines, contingency planning for the School of MEM January intake, and progress on the Retention and Work Plans. The committee also discussed study permit complexities, CRM integration, and proactive compliance measures to support student success.

- School of MEM –Online delivery for new international students, who don't yet have a study permit for September intake, was proposed but tabled due to the complexity of activating so quickly. Those students will move to January intake.
- Reporting Timelines: Reporting will shift to November and February, with an Admissions report due January 9. December will focus on conversion activities.
- International Admissions: Updates covered admissions timelines, offer targets, student-card distribution, and residence deadlines. The committee endorsed stronger compliance and PALS adoption.
- Recruitment Updates: Domestic and international recruitment efforts continue, with early applications (+100 vs. 70 at this time last year). A new advertising agency is being selected and branding campaign is on track for fall launch. A new international recruiter has been hired and is in the field now.
- Retention Plan: A draft plan is in place, with completion expected by month-end. F. Rodrigues will present the results of the work effort to refine five-year enrolment projections at the next meeting.

**Vice President and Academic Dean (Interim)**  
**Report to Academic Council**  
October 2025

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**IQAP Cyclical Reviews**

The Final Assessment Report for King's French modules moved through Subcommittee on Program Review – Undergraduate (SUPR-U) and Senate Committee on Academic Curriculum and Awards (ACA), receiving an assessment of “Good Quality.” Congratulations to the French program and Department of English, French, and Writing, and to Program Coordinator Dr. Corina Sandu and Chair Ian Rae. The Final Assessment Report, as submitted to Western Senate, is appended below.

The cyclical review of Thanatology has been completed and will be moving to SUPR-U and ACA imminently.

Cyclical reviews are currently underway for Disability Studies and for History and Human Rights Studies.

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**Western Senate and Committees**

Braedan Lovie and Dr. Laura Melnyk Gribble, who both sit on Western Senate, have also been appointed to Senate Review Board Academic (SRBA). Thanks to both for representing King's in these roles.

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**Indigenous Allyship at Western**

The Office of Indigenous Initiatives at Western has introduced two new resources to promote allyship and respectful, reciprocal relationships with Indigenous Peoples:

*Braiding Truth Into Action: A Guide Towards Indigenous Allyship at Western University:*

<https://indigenous.uwo.ca/allyship/>

*Centering Indigenous Voices: Guide Toward Allyship in Indigenous Research:*

[https://uwo.ca/research/services/resources/allyship\\_guide.html](https://uwo.ca/research/services/resources/allyship_guide.html)

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## Indigenous Affirmation Policy

In June, Western Senate approved the policy and procedure for affirming declarations of Indigenous Citizenship or Membership: [https://indigenous.uwo.ca/initiatives/policiesguidelines/indigenous\\_affirmation.html](https://indigenous.uwo.ca/initiatives/policiesguidelines/indigenous_affirmation.html)

Dr. Christy Bressette, Vice-Provost / Associate Vice-President (Indigenous Initiatives) Western University, will join Academic Council on October 22 to present on this policy and discuss policy alignment at the affiliated colleges.

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## Upcoming Events

Veritas Lecture: *Walking Together in the Age of Artificial Intelligence: Relationality, Community, and the Culture of Encounter* with Dr. Cory Labrecque (Université de Laval): Thursday November 20.

Feast of Christ the King Eucharistic Celebration and Student Awards Celebration: Sunday November 23.

Awards for Teaching Excellence and Christopher Perrin Beatty Lecture with 2024–25 recipients, Claudia Clausius (full-time award) and Prof. Lucas Andersen (part-time award): Date and time TBD.

Details to be announced.

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Respectfully submitted,



Mark Yenson  
Vice President and Academic Dean (Interim)



**French**  
**Final Assessment Report & Implementation Plan**  
**September 2025**

<b>Faculty / Affiliated University College</b>	King's University College	
<b>Degrees Offered</b>	Bachelor of Arts (B.A.)	
<b>Date of Last Review</b>	2015-2016	
<b>Modules Reviewed</b>	Honours Specialization in French Literature and Language Specialization in French Studies Major in French Language and Literature Minor in French Language and Literature	
<b>External Reviewers</b>	Dr. Carmen LeBlanc Department of French Carleton University	Dr. Sante A. Viselli French Studies University of Winnipeg
<b>Internal Reviewer</b>	Vicki Sweeney, Associate Dean, Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences Huron University College	Jiya Sahni Honours Specialization in Biology with a Minor in Political Science
<b>Date of Site Visit</b>	March 18 & 19, 2025	
<b>Date Review Report Received</b>	April 7, 2025	
<b>Date Program/Faculty Response Received</b>	Program: June 12, 2025 Faculty: June 12, 2025	
<b>Evaluation</b>	Good Quality	
<b>Approval Dates</b>	SUPR-U: September 23, 2025 ACA: October 7, 2025 Senate (for information): October 17, 2025	
<b>Year of Next Review</b>	2032-2033	
<b>Progress Report</b>	June 2028	

### **Overview of Western’s Cyclical Review Assessment Reporting Process**

In accordance with Western’s Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), the Final Assessment Report (FAR) provides a summary of the cyclical review, internal responses, and assessment and evaluation of the French Program delivered by King’s University College.

This FAR considers the following documents:

- the program’s self-study brief;
- the external reviewers’ report;
- the response from the Program; and
- the response from the Academic Dean, King’s University College.

This FAR identifies the strengths of the program and opportunities for program enhancement and improvement, and details the recommendations of the external reviewers – noting those recommendations to be prioritized for implementation.

The Implementation Plan details the recommendations from the FAR that have been selected for implementation, identifies who is responsible for approving and acting on the recommendations, specifies any action or follow-up that is required, and defines the timeline for completion.

The FAR (including Implementation Plan) is sent for approval through the Senate Undergraduate Program Review Committee (SUPR-U) and ACA, then for information to Senate and to the Ontario Universities’ Council on Quality Assurance. Subsequently, it is publicly accessible on Western’s IQAP website. The FAR is the only document from the undergraduate cyclical review process that is made public; all other documents are confidential to the Program, King’s University College, and SUPR-U.

## **Executive Summary**

The Department of English, French, and Writing (EFW) offers modules in each of these areas and also houses a foundation year program called Foundations in The New Liberal Arts. In terms of the French program modules, the promise is to ensure students progress in terms of language skills, as well as analytical and critical thinking. Modular enrollments in the French program were at 80 in 2024-2025.

The self-study was informed by a student focus group, student survey, alumni survey and a suite of consultations with English and French faculty members and the team members in the Academic Dean's Office. The Centre for Teaching and Learning supported the review of program learning outcomes as well as facilitated a curriculum mapping exercise.

The external reviewers shared a positive assessment of the French Program at King's. They offer nine recommendations with considerations for further enhancement.

## **Strengths and Innovative Features Identified by the Program**

- Faculty commitment to student success, a personalized approach, and faculty member research embedded in the service of teaching.
  - Faculty members maintain prolific records in research, grant winning, and publication.
- Emphasizes hands-on learning through immersive reenactments, cultural field trips, and creative language activities. Notable initiatives include a planned experiential trip to Montreal and Ottawa (in collaboration with Political Science and History), "Medieval Night" events, and plans to establish a DELF/DALF Centre.
- Offers four Direct Pathways into Western University's Bachelor of Education, including a dedicated French Pathway with multiple teaching certification options and an impressive near-100% employment rate for Teachers' College graduates.
- Maintains active outreach to local Francophone communities, hosts successful recruitment events like Open Houses and "French Day" for high school students, and fosters interdisciplinary collaboration across departments.
- Achievements include three 2024 Board of Directors' Gold student medal recipients, 95% student satisfaction, and strong alumni endorsements. Students particularly value the small class sizes, high-quality teaching, and supportive community atmosphere.
- Home of the bilingual journal *Transcr(é)ation*, an online publication dedicated to intermediality and the dialogues between texts and films.
- Very dynamic and creative King's French Club, that organizes social events aiming to enhance students' French proficiency and foster a vibrant community of French enthusiasts.

- Students have gained entry to some of the best graduate programs in Canada.

### **Concerns and Areas of Improvement Identified and Discussed by the Program**

- The program faces long-term challenges including an overall decline in student numbers, a drop in Honours Specialization enrollment, and retention issues between first and second year.
- Faculty staffing challenges due to a reduction in full-time faculty, loss of a limited-term instructor to another institution, overreliance on precariously employed part-time staff, and heavier-than-average teaching loads that hinder research productivity.
- Frequent turnover of Academic Program Advisors—eight in six years—has led to administrative instability that negatively affects student recruitment and retention.
- Limited course variety, with student dissatisfaction over the lack of electives and diversity in topics—particularly in areas like decolonization, anti-racism, gender, and sexual identities.
- There is a need for a more in-depth review of the structure of modules with the aim of offering courses that address the needs of today's student population and the shifts in the state of the discipline.
- Limited experiential learning opportunities due to resource constraints, prevent the integration of a community service component and restrict access to structured activities like field trips and community engagement.
- Ongoing communication and collaboration gaps, marked by fragmentation across the college, reduced interdisciplinary engagement, and a need for stronger ties with the Western French department.

### **Review Process**

As part of the external review, the review committee, comprising two external reviewers and an internal reviewer, were provided with Volume I and II of the self-study brief in advance of the scheduled review and then met in-person over two days with the:

- Vice-Provost (Academic Programs)
- Director of Academic Quality and Enhancement
- Associate Academic Dean
- Interim Vice-President, King's University College
- Director of Enrolment Services & Registrar
- Director of Information Technology Services
- Director of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Decolonization
- Associate Dean of Research
- Associate Librarian, Acquisitions & Collection Strategies
- Coordinator, French Program
- Chair, Department of English

- Administrative Staff
- Program Faculty
- Program Students

Following the site visit, the external reviewers submitted a comprehensive report of their findings which was sent to the Program and Dean for review and response. Formative documents, including Volumes I and II of the Self-Study, the External Report, and the Program and Decanal responses form the basis of this Final Assessment Report (FAR) of the King's French Program. The FAR is collated and submitted to SUPR-U by the Internal Reviewer with the support of the Office of Academic Quality and Enhancement.

### **Summative Assessment – External Reviewers' Report**

External reviewers shared that *“The French program at King’s has a very strong reputation, not only in Ontario and in Canada, but also internationally. The reviewers recognize the central role the program plays in the very existence of the College as a moral compass, and in its partnership with Western for the dissemination of knowledge through teaching, research, and community involvement.”*

### **Strengths of the Program**

- Although limited resources prevent the program from offering a formal community service component, it has significantly expanded experiential learning while actively exploring new partnerships and interdisciplinary collaborations to further enrich student engagement.
- Curriculum is gradually shifting from a traditional focus on canonical texts and French history toward a more decentralized, culturally diverse curriculum, with growing recognition—by both faculty and students—of the need to emphasize practical language skills alongside evolving academic trends.
  - Demonstrated adaptability to the evolving economy by introducing pedagogical innovations and aligning offerings with students' changing interests, needs, and aspirations.
  - Process-based, in-person assessments encourage critical thinking and creativity through collaborative projects—such as videos, events, and performances—while multi-phase essay assignments help ensure authentic student learning and engagement.
  - The flipped classroom model is used in literature and culture courses. According to the faculty, it promotes student engagement. This was confirmed during our meeting with the students.
- Bridging curriculum gaps by offering inclusive, diverse programming that immerses students in a range of value systems, empowering them to critically examine and challenge commonly held beliefs and perspectives.

- Students value the strong sense of community and supportive faculty, highlighting how its diverse student body and inclusive course content reflect King's global educational mission.
- Student evaluations of the French program are highly positive, highlighting excellent instruction, small class sizes, and faculty accessibility, with added value from research assistant opportunities, responsive course scheduling, and growing interest in translation and interdisciplinary offerings to better meet student needs.
- Students can spend their third year at the Université Catholique de Lille in France. Funding is provided by the institution in the form of four scholarships equivalent to the tuition fees.

### **Areas of Concern or Prospective Improvement**

- Underfunded and reliant on limited-term and part-time faculty; in need of additional hires to sustain course offerings, meet graduation requirements, and support its continued success. (*Associated with Recommendation #1*)
  - Sustaining mentorship and research opportunities is challenging without additional resources and recognition of research supervision in workload planning. (*Associated with Recommendation #1*)
- Students would like more emphasis to be placed on practical language acquisition. (*Associated with Recommendation #5*) Pg. 3
  - Emphasize that all language courses are offered in person and include an additional hour of oral conversation in small groups.
- Invest in further engagement with the Franco-Ontarian community. (*Associated with Recommendation #7*)
- Promote double majors and the French Minor—especially in combination with non-traditional disciplines like sciences, education, law, and cultural studies—through clear academic pathways, as these combinations are effective recruitment tools for careers in teaching and public service. (*Associated with Recommendation #9*)
- Traditional literature-focused approach—though pedagogically valuable—is losing appeal among students, prompting a shift toward more broadly themed and popular literature courses.
- While retention rates in each of the modules for the upper years, does not appear to be an issue, further examination should take place at retention from 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> year.

**Summary of the Reviewers’ Recommendations and Program/Faculty Responses**

The following are the reviewers’ recommendations in the order listed by the external reviewers. Recommendations requiring implementation have been marked with an asterisk (\*).

Reviewers’ Recommendation	Program/Faculty Response
<p><b>Recommendation #1:</b>                      To ensure sustainability and growth, it is strongly recommended that the institution bolster its capacity. A hire in French Language, Linguistics, or Translation—ideally with expertise in second language acquisition and pedagogy – is suggested.</p>	<p><b>Program:</b>                      The program agrees with reviewers on the urgent need for a new hire, especially since only two permanent faculty currently support the French program. However, due to the broader challenges in post-secondary education and the global decline in French programs, securing a new tenure-track position is difficult. While efforts to secure such a position will continue, the department has arranged a one-year limited-term appointment of a faculty member whose expertise will help enhance program offerings in 2025–26.</p> <p><b>Faculty:</b> One LTA position from July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026 has been finalized. The Academic Dean’s Office will consider further hiring requests from all academic units based on strategic and budgetary considerations.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation #2:</b>                      Prerequisite courses (French 1004, 1010, 1900E or a new course) should be offered in the spring-summer semester for students who need to improve their level of French before entering the program. This could result in increased enrollments.</p>	<p><b>Program:</b>                      Currently, French 1004 is the only prerequisite French course at King's, but low enrollment makes it unfeasible to offer both during the year and in the intersession. The department is considering surveying students in 2025–2026 to gauge interest in a summer offering. Before proposing it as an online summer course in 2026, they must consult with Academic Planning and consider logistical factors, including the course’s lab component and Western’s limited summer French offerings.</p> <p><b>Faculty:</b> The Dean’s Office agrees with and supports the program response.</p>

<p><b>Recommendation #3:</b> The French-Language Indigenous and Culture in Canada course (French 3760F/G) should be part of the program requirements.</p>	<p><b>Program:</b> The program agrees that a general Indigenous Studies course should be required for all undergraduate students at King's, and are honoured to be able to offer such a unique course as French 3760F/G. In the current program requirements, while French 3760F/G is not formally identified as a required course for all modules, it is offered every two years and is taken by the vast majority of French students, as evidenced by the high enrolment seen during the last years. In order for this course to become part of the program requirements, a formal module change request must be made to the EPC and forwarded for the proper chain of approval leading to Western's Senate.</p> <p><b>Faculty:</b> The Dean's Office agrees with and supports the program response.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation #4:</b> Include a foundation course in second year specifically on French literature from Canada which could include different genres (theatre, short stories, manuscripts, novels, etc.).</p>	<p><b>Program:</b> The department fully recognizes the importance of French-Canadian literature within a French program at a Canadian university. While this area was once more robust—particularly prior to the unreplaced 2018 retirement—ongoing resource constraints have made it unfeasible to introduce a dedicated second-year course at this time. As a practical alternative, the department will recommend incorporating French-Canadian texts and cultural themes into the existing second-year literature course (FR 2605–2606) to ensure continued exposure to this vital aspect of the curriculum.</p> <p><b>Faculty:</b> The Dean's Office agrees with and supports the program response. An inclusion of French-Canadian authors into course syllabi would enhance the holistic nature of the second-year foundation course in literature (French 2605F/G – French 2606F/G Reading Literature in French).</p>
<p><b>Recommendation #5:</b> Add a conversation course specifically dedicated to oral French with tasks such as presentations, recitations, discussions, basic phonetics to help students learn the pronunciation of new words, in an effort to narrow the gap between those who have completed a French immersion program and those who have completed the core French program.</p>	<p><b>Program:</b> The department appreciates the reviewers' insights and acknowledges shared challenges across institutions in meeting student needs. In response to the recommendation, King's will offer French 2906A/B (focused on oral skills and including a lab component) starting in Winter 2026, as a complement to French 2905A/B, which emphasizes writing and reading strategies.</p> <p><b>Faculty:</b> The Dean's Office agrees with and supports the program response.</p>

<p><b>Recommendation #6:</b> King’s faculty/administration is strongly encouraged to include at least one French course as a requirement in other programs where relevant (e.g. History, Law and Public Policy, Management, Economics and Mathematics) since French one of the official languages of Canada. This could increase enrolment in French Minor.</p>	<p><b>Program:</b> The department is thankful for the reviewers’ support, which strengthens ongoing discussions with other programs. While the benefits of bilingualism are widely acknowledged, making French courses mandatory for students in other departments would require administrative backing and a formal institutional framework.</p> <p><b>Faculty:</b> An initiative such as this requires coordinated dialogue across other departments, along with supportive administrative and policy framework to ensure feasibility, equity, and sustainability. The Dean’s Office supports the program in engaging in these conversations with other academic programs.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation #7:</b> Expand outreach to Franco-Ontarian communities, particularly to francophone schools to recruit prospective students, but also to experience firsthand the culture. Consider exploring a community-based experiences by establishing a volunteer program for students wishing to pursue a career in teaching with the three French primary schools and the French secondary school in London.</p>	<p><b>Program:</b> Francophone schools in Ontario face similar challenges as others across Canada due to declining interest in Liberal Arts. In response, the French Program has actively expanded outreach, notably through two successful “French Day” events that engaged local high school students. To support students pursuing teaching careers, the department plans to propose a new 3000-level course, French Language Skills in the Classroom, which will include a mandatory community-based component involving volunteer work in local French schools.</p> <p><b>Faculty:</b> The Dean’s Office agrees with and supports the program response.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation #8:</b> Consider the possibility of exchanging faculty expertise with Western or Huron. This would allow diversification of course offerings without stretching resources.</p>	<p><b>Program:</b> The program recognizes the potential of this recommendation and foresees the immense benefit of an exchange of faculty expertise involving faculty members from several French programs at Western and its affiliates. While the French faculty at King's can attest to a long tradition of collegial relationships, exchanges and collaborative projects with colleagues at Huron and Main, the exchange of faculty expertise as suggested in this recommendation is unlikely to be feasible given the heavy administrative workload involved in this initiative.</p> <p><b>Faculty:</b> While a faculty exchange could indeed enhance the expertise members of the faculty bring, structural, administrative, and workload constraints may hinder the feasibility of such exchanges. Furthermore, faculty are governed by different agreements and unions which could also add to the challenges.</p>

<p><b>Recommendation #9:</b> Consider merging the French Language and Literature and the French Studies options into one stream, offering a common foundation with the same language courses for all the modules, including the Minor, followed by specialized courses in 3rd and 4<sup>th</sup> years.</p>	<p><b>Program:</b> This is probably the most powerful recommendation to come out of the French Program Review. The program fully supports the proposal to restructure the curriculum around a unified foundational core, followed by specialized courses in the third and fourth years. The program is committed to advancing this initiative and will begin consultations with the administration to explore effective strategies for enhancing the program’s structure. This effort will be grounded in strong college-level foundations and aligned with King's new strategic plan, requiring close collaboration with institutional leadership.</p> <p><b>Faculty:</b> The Dean’s Office supports the program response and will collaborate with the program on the streamlining of modules.</p>
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**Implementation Plan**

The Implementation Plan provides a summary of the recommendations that require action and/or follow-up. In each case, the Program Chair, and the Dean of the Faculty are responsible for enacting and monitoring the actions noted in Implementation Plan.

Note that recommendation #8 was not prioritized in the implementation plan below, given that both the Program and Faculty deem it not to be actionable, as articulated in their responses above.

Recommendation	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
<p><b>Recommendation #1:</b>                      Bolster capacity via a hire in French Language, Linguistics, or Translation—ideally with expertise in second language acquisition and pedagogy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New LTA one-year term will commence on July 1st, 2025.</li> <li>• Prepare and submit a new hire request for a faculty member specializing in French Language, Linguistics, or Translation to the Department of EFW. Upon departmental and Chair approval, forward the request to the Educational Policy Committee (EPC) for further consideration.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinator</li> <li>• Dean</li> </ul>	By Sept 2025
<p><b>Recommendation #2:</b>                      Prerequisite courses (French 1004, 1010, 1900E or a new course) should be offered in the spring-summer term for students who need to improve their level of French before entering the program.</p>	<p>Explore the feasibility of offering French 1004 as an online summer course in 2026 by taking the following steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey students during the 2025–2026 academic year to assess interest in taking French 1004 during the summer term.</li> <li>• Consult with King’s Academic Planning and Analysis to evaluate the resource requirements and potential impact on departmental dynamics, especially considering the course’s lab component.</li> <li>• Review French course offerings at Western during the intersession, noting that as of Spring–Summer 2025, only French 1910 is being offered due to limited resources and low enrolment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinator</li> <li>• Dean</li> </ul>	By December 2025

<p><b>Recommendation #3:</b> The French-Language Indigenous and Culture in Canada course (French 3760F/G) should be part of the program requirements.</p>	<p>Initiate the process to make French 3760F/G a required course within the French program by preparing a formal modification request to include French 3760F/G as a required course across all relevant French program modules. Submit the request to the Educational Policy Committee (EPC), and subsequently to Senate committees, for review and approval.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinator</li> <li>• Dean</li> </ul>	<p>By December 2025</p>
<p><b>Recommendation #4:</b> Include a foundation course in second year specifically on French literature from Canada which could include different genres (theatre, short stories, manuscripts, novels, etc.).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include French-Canadian texts and cultural topics in the syllabi for French 2605F/G – French 2606F/G, as a realistic alternative to introducing a new second-year foundation course.</li> <li>• Formally communicate this recommendation to faculty teaching French 2605F/G – French 2606F/G.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinator</li> <li>• Dean</li> </ul>	<p>July 2025</p>
<p><b>Recommendation #5:</b> Add a conversation course specifically dedicated to oral French to help students learn the pronunciation of new words, in an effort to narrow the gap between those who have completed a French immersion program and those who have completed the core French program.</p>	<p>Confirm the implementation of French 2906A/B, beginning Winter 2026, as a complement to French 2905A/B. French 2906A/B will focus on oral skills development and include a lab component for oral practice, addressing student needs identified in surveys and aligning with recommendations from the Program Review. French 2900 (1.00 cr.) will be replaced by the two half-credit courses French 2906A/B and French 2906A/B.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinator</li> <li>• Dean</li> </ul>	<p>By January 2026</p>
<p><b>Recommendation #6:</b> Include at least one French course as a requirement in other programs where relevant (e.g. History, Law and Public Policy, Management, Economics and Mathematics).</p>	<p>Informally solicit interest and feasibility of such an initiative with academic leaders across King’s. Should this be deemed possible and of interest, craft a plan that includes a policy framework.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinator</li> <li>• Dean</li> </ul>	<p>Check in at June 2028 progress report</p>
<p><b>Recommendation #7:</b> Expand outreach to Franco-Ontarian communities, particularly to francophone schools to recruit prospective students, but also to experience firsthand the culture. Consider exploring varied</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen outreach and community engagement efforts in support of French program recruitment and experiential learning by expanding the successful French Day initiative.</li> <li>• Develop a new 3000-level course proposal titled French Language Skills in the Classroom that will:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be open to third- and fourth-year students interested in teaching careers.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinator</li> <li>• Dean</li> </ul>	<p>By June 2026</p>

<p>community-based experience formats.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish the foundations of a volunteer program for French students, requiring students to complete a minimum of 5 hours of volunteer work in a local French school.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Recommendation #9:</b> Consider merging the French Language and Literature and the French Studies options into one stream, offering a common foundation with the same language courses for all the modules, including the Minor, followed by specialized courses in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> years.</p>	<p>Initiate restructuring of the French Program to establish a more cohesive and strategic curriculum by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing a common foundational core for all French program modules, followed by specialized courses in the third and fourth years.</li> <li>• Launching consultations with administration to explore structural improvements aligned with the College’s strategic plan.</li> <li>• Ensuring collaboration across departments and administrative units to build a strong institutional foundation that supports long-term program sustainability and growth.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinator</li> <li>• Dean</li> </ul>	<p>By December 2026</p>



**ACADEMIC COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
September 24, 2025**

The meeting was held at 2:40 p.m. in Labatt Hall, Room 103, and via Zoom.

COUNCILORS:

Aidan Bobkowicz  
Graham Broad  
Arashdeep Chahal  
Adrienne Co-Dyre  
John Dool  
Russell Duvernoy\*  
Jordan Fairbairn  
Josephine Gemson  
Eunice Gorman  
John Grant  
Tom Gray\*  
Chaya Halberstam \*  
Erin Hannah  
Joe Henry  
Peter Ibbott \*

Liam Kennedy  
Allyson Larkin  
Miriam Love  
Braedan Lovie  
Krista Lysack  
Donna Maynard\*  
Alison Meek  
Laura Melnyk Gribble  
Brian Patton 🌐  
Marcie Penner  
Jeff Preston 🌐  
Felipe Rodrigues\*  
Patrick Ryan  
Jane Sanders

Jennifer Silcox  
Derek Silva  
Natalie Spruce  
Karen Thomson  
Renfang Tian\*  
Thomas Tiekou  
Paul Tufts \*  
Joseph Turnbull  
Robert Ventresca  
Corinne Walsh  
Ruth Wilson  
Paul Wilton  
Mark Yenson

\* Regrets  
🌐 Zoom

OBSERVERS: Karen Gingrich, Himm Lai, Cynthia Lessard, Sonya Lobsinger, Carri Rodgers-Rowley, Emma Swiatek, Erin Wilson.

MINUTE TAKER: Ann Hoffer

R. Ventresca, Chair, called the meeting to order at 2:33 p.m.

**1.0 Land Acknowledgment**

B. Lovie offered a land acknowledgment, reflecting on Dr. Niigaan Sinclair’s Veritas lecture and the importance of being “and” people coming together in community to honour King’s shared values, mission, and vision.

**2.0 Opening Prayer**

J. Dool delivered the opening prayer, reflecting on our calling to serve students’ needs beyond education and learning.

**3.0 Academic Council Orientation**

P. Wilton gave a brief overview of King’s governance structure and member responsibilities. Based on the attendance at last year’s session and self-evaluation feedback, the Governance and Nominations Committee recommended holding the orientation at the first meeting of each academic year.

Paul outlined the history of bicameral university governance, noting that a 1906 Royal Commission recommended separating responsibilities between a Board of lay directors and an Academic Senate (Senate) to balance faculty authority over teaching and research with public accountability.

Paul used a dance analogy to explain the leadership dynamic: for academic matters, Senate “leads the dance” with delegated authority from the Board (see slide 10, [Orientation slide deck on OWL](#)), while the Board typically leads with consultation from Senate (see slides 11-12). He also referenced Western’s Senate practices, including how new business is introduced and how motions work. At King’s, voting Council members vote by raising cards to ensure clarity amid observers present, and ballot vote requests should be submitted in advance. A 3-minute discussion ensued.

- In response to a question about the role of elected members, Paul clarified that while members are encouraged to engage with their constituencies, the bylaw requires them to act in the best interests of the entire College and all stakeholders, making independent decisions informed by Council discussions.

R. Ventresca acknowledged P. Wilton for recently completing his PhD at the University of Toronto specializing in university governance. A round of applause followed.

**Action: Slides from this presentation will be posted to OWL for members’ access.**

## 4.0 Committee Reports

### 4.1 Governance and Nominations Committee

M. Yenson, Committee Chair, noted a correction to one (of two) draft motions provided in the report.

**Motion #1:** To recommend an amendment to the Academic Council bylaw to the Board and Corporate Members to:

- 1) Amend the Academic Council year from September 1 - August 31 to July 1 – [June 30/August 31](#)
- 2) Grant the University Secretary authority to update titles of ex-officio roles on Academic Council and its committees as title changes occur, subject to the approval of the Corporate Members at the next Annual Members’ Meeting

**Moved by:** Governance and Nominations Committee

**CARRIED.**

**Motion #2:** To recommend to the Board the amendment of the following terms of reference for Academic Council’s Committees as attached:

- Mission Integration and Inclusion Committee
- Research Committee
- Research Ethics Review Committee
- Strategic Enrolment Management Committee

At the request of a member, it was requested consider each committee’s Terms of Reference separately to allow for individual discussion and approval.

**Motion 2a:** To recommend to the Board the amended Terms of Reference for the Mission Integration and Inclusion Committee.

**Moved by:** Governance and Nominations Committee

**Referred back to the Governance and Nominations Committee**

An 8-minute discussion ensued:

- A friendly amendment included correcting the title to Vice-President of Student Affairs
- Questioning the removal of the EDID Office (or designate) as a possible error.
- This Committee has only had two meetings and a number of further revisions are anticipated

- A member asked about the role of EDID within the structure of King's as a Catholic institution, referencing section 4.6 of the ordinances. The President (Interim) clarified that this section refers to canon law, and oversight does not fall within the Committee's responsibilities
- A member suggested the Committee consider engaging an EDI consultant in deliberations on membership

**Action: The Governance and Nominations Committee to consult with the Mission Integration and Inclusion Committee and bring forward a recommendation to Council.**

**Motion 2b:** To recommend to the Board the amended Terms of Reference for the Research Committee.

**Moved by:** Governance and Nominations Committee

**CARRIED**

**Motion 2c:** To recommend to the Board the amended Terms of Reference for the Research Ethics Review Committee (RERC)

**Moved by:** Governance and Nominations Committee

Council discussed proposed changes to the RERC Terms of Reference, specifically reassigning the Chair and Vice-Chair roles to Research Facilitators due to ongoing recruitment challenges. Members expressed concern about non-faculty holding these positions, emphasizing the need for faculty leadership. It was noted that while current Research Facilitators hold PhDs, that role does not require one but does require experience in research ethics review. E. Hannah added that the Associate Dean (Research) is separate from this Committee and the workload makes the role unsuitable for part-time faculty.

**Amendment:** To strike Section 4.3 of the Terms of Reference for further review by the Governance and Nominations Committee.

**Moved by:** M. Penner, seconded by D. Silva

**CARRIED** (4 abstentions)

- It was suggested the Terms of Reference be approved as amended, with the Chair role provisionally maintained and the Vice-Chair position remaining vacant, allowing the Committee to continue its work.

**Amended Motion:** To recommend to the Board the Terms of Reference for the Research Ethics Review Committee, as amended.

**Moved by:** P. Ryan, seconded by B. Lovie

**CARRIED** (2 abstentions)

**Motion 2d:** To recommend to the Board the amended Terms of Reference for the Strategic Enrolment Management Committee

**Moved by:** Governance and Nominations Committee

A member suggested friendly amendments to replace "Chief Operating Office" (COO) with "Chair" throughout the document. It was noted that the Chair role shifted from the VP Academic Dean (VPAD) to the COO due the VPAD's existing committee workload and noted the change has produced positive results. In response to a question, R. Ventresca clarified that the COO remains a contract position.

**Amended Motion: To approve the SEM Terms of Reference referring the matter of Chair back to the Governance and Nominating Committee for discussion.**

**CARRIED**

A member noted that the Governance and Nominations Committee currently only has two of its three faculty members and requested that the raw self-study data be shared with Academic Council. The VPAD agreed.

**ACTION: M. Yenson to share the raw self-study data with faculty members on Academic Council.**

## **5.0 Reports**

### **5.1 President**

R. Ventresca, President (Interim), reported strong enrolment at King's, with applications up 27% compared to 2.7% increase across OUAC. International enrolment remains a risk, with system-wide visa applications down 16%, though King's saw a 13% increase. While enrolment brings financial stability, it does not eliminate the deficit; moderate projections are expected to be met. Over the summer, \$5.7M was generated, notably from MEM online courses. Residence is at full capacity with broader representation across campus.

International challenges persist, including study permit delays, though advocacy is underway. Western's negotiations with *Navitas* are being monitored.

The King's Community Support Centre was commended, and Council was encouraged to visit their website.

Rob noted the sold-out Homecoming dinner and highlighted upcoming events, including the Law and Public Policy Forum and a full reading of the Calls to Action for the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

A member led a round of applause to acknowledge the largest student intake in King's history.

### **5.2 Vice-President and Academic Dean**

M. Yenson, VPAD (Interim), highlighted the welcome of four new faculty members to the King's community this fall, as noted in his report (circulated with the agenda).

Mark noted that Enrolment Services has been restructured for greater effectiveness, moving to a Registrar's Office model led by T. Gray, with recruitment now under Marketing and Communications, led by A. Casson. In response to a question about this change, he explained that separating recruitment from admissions allows recruiters to focus on outreach while admissions staff handle adjudication, addressing challenges faced under the previous join-role structure.

He reported that as of September 12, 2025, undergraduate domestic fee-paying enrolment has surpassed the optimistic target for first-year students (112.7%) and is nearing the target for upper year students (88.6%). For international fee-paying students, first-year enrolment is at 53.7% of the target, with 17 new upper-year admits. Some international students faced Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) related delays, and deferrals to January are being arranged where possible.

Questions were raised regarding the enrolment update, particularly its impact on

curriculum planning. A higher minimum enrolment threshold had been applied to required courses, reducing those with fewer than 15 students from 42 to approximately 24-25 course offerings. Chairs and Directors were thanked for their efforts in implementing these changes.

A member shared that it would be valuable to have the Enrolment Report showing specific registration numbers.

**Action: Mark Yenson to share the *ex post facto* Enrolment Report with Academic Council members.**

**5.2.1 Christy Bressette, Vice-Provost & Associate Vice-President Indigenous Initiatives, Western University,** was unable to attend due to a last-minute commitment but is expected to join in October. Her focus includes aligning affiliate policies with Office of Indigenous Initiatives, Western. Two new resources were highlighted.

Action: The resources [Braiding Truth Into Action: A Guide Towards Indigenous Allyship at Western University](#) and [Centering Indigenous Voices: A Guide Towards Allyship in Indigenous Research](#) will be shared with faculty.

### **5.3 King's University Council Students' Council (KUCSC) Report**

B. Lovie, KUCSC President, thanked individuals across campus, including the Student Affairs and Campus Life team, for their ongoing contributions. Braedan recognized A. Bobkowicz for coordinating student appointments to various departments, adding that Aidan will follow up with more details. Braedan further thanked A. Bobkowicz and A. Chahal for their support on Council and Committees and acknowledged H. Lai, a KUCSC Council member attending as an observer.

Braedan also announced the release of *The Crown*, a student-led KUCSC publication highlighting student initiatives club creation.

KUCSC was applauded for its support of orientation activities and move-in day.

## **6.0 The Unanimous Consent Agenda**

Both the Planning and Priorities Committee Report (6.1) and Minutes of the Meeting of July 7, 2025 (6.4) were moved to Items Removed from the Consent Agenda

### **6.2 Strategic Enrolment Management Committee Report**

**Motion:** To receive the Strategic Enrolment Management Committee Report.

**Moved by:** B. Lovie, seconded by L. Melnyk Gribble.

**CARRIED**

### **6.3 Educational Policy Committee Report**

**Motion:** To receive the Educational Policy Committee Report.

**Moved by:** B. Lovie, seconded by L. Melnyk Gribble.

**CARRIED**

## 7.0 Items Removed from the Consent Agenda

### 7.1 Planning and Priorities Committee (P&P) Report (was 6.1)

Discussion focused on classroom modernization and IT support. While some classrooms have upgraded technology, others still lack basic resources, such as projector cables and sufficient power outlets, which can impact learning, especially during longer classes. Reduced ITS staffing has made consistent support more difficult. The P&P Committee was asked to consider how these issues may affect student retention.

Concerns were raised about prioritizing modernization over essential IT needs. It was clarified that the classroom modernization project is funded separately through Foundation donations and KUCSC contributions, not through capital projects. R. Ventresca noted that modernization is a part of a long-term, integrated plan to engage donors and improve campus spaces. Rob emphasized the need to gather information, assess, and triage priorities given current financial constraints. M. Yenson added that if ITS is unable to resolve an issue, faculty should contact him to explore alternate classroom options with Enrolment Services.

**Action:** Members with concerns are invited to submit their concerns, in writing, to the Planning and Priorities Committee.

### 7.2 Minutes of the Meeting of July 23, 2025 (was 6.4)

A. Meek noted that the minutes from the June 18, 2025 meeting do not, in her view, accurately reflect the level of support for the motion she introduced at that meeting. Alison requested that the wording be revised to indicate that there was significant support for the motion.

**Action:** P. Wilton confirmed that the items will be reviewed and new language incorporated.

A correction was noted on page four to replace the initial "A." with "L." for Professor Melnyk Gribble.

**Motion:** To approve the minutes of July 23, 2025, as amended.

**Moved by:** T. Tiekku, seconded by P. Ryan.

**CARRIED.**

## 8.0 New Business

No items were noted.

## 9.0 Adjournment

**Motion:** To adjourn the meeting at 4:11 p.m.

**Moved by:** B. Lovie, seconded by P. Ryan

**CARRIED**

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Robert Ventresca,  
Chair



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Paul Wilton,  
University Secretary