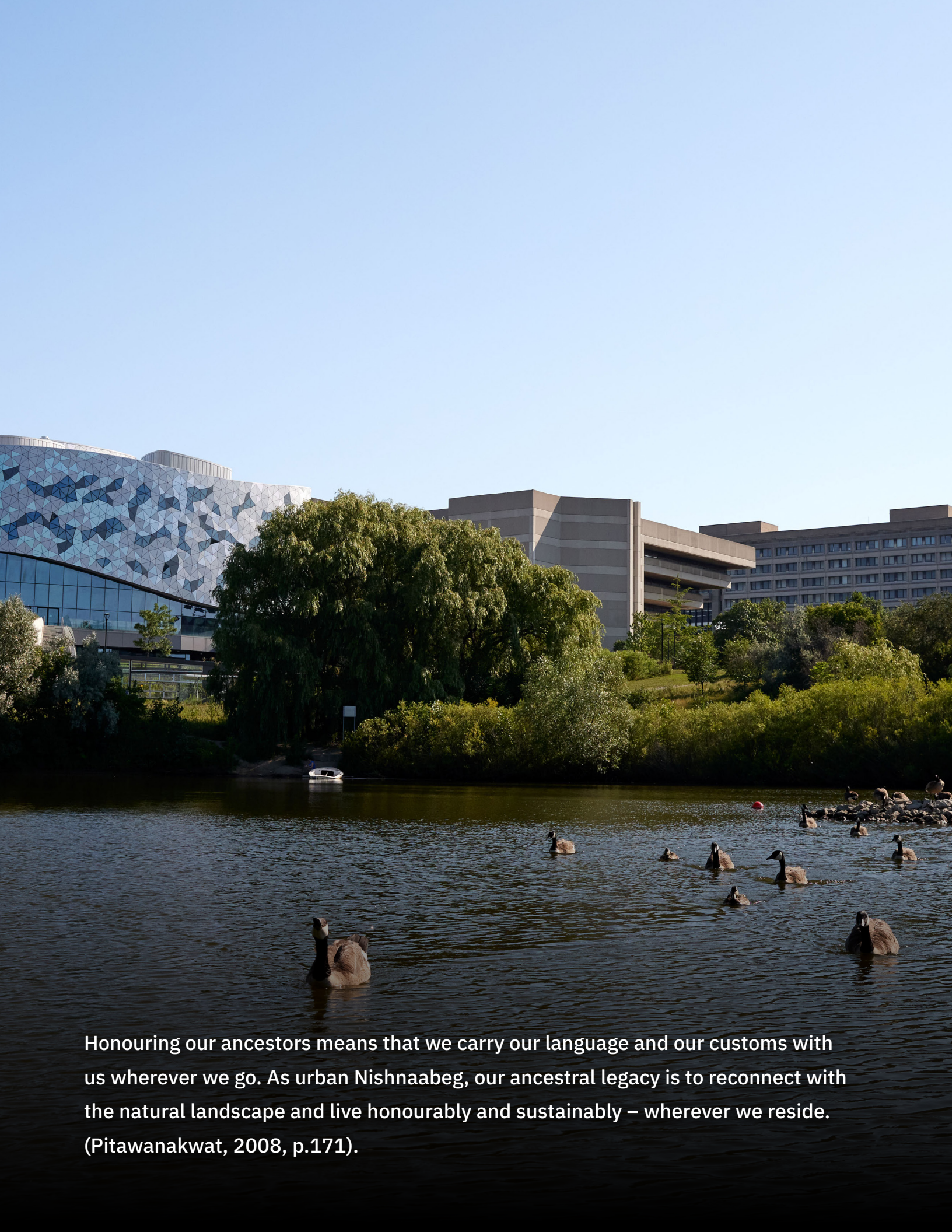


Indigenous Framework Six-Year Review

Looking Back To Inform Our Path Forward

AUGUST 2024





Honouring our ancestors means that we carry our language and our customs with us wherever we go. As urban Nishnaabeg, our ancestral legacy is to reconnect with the natural landscape and live honourably and sustainably – wherever we reside. (Pitawanakwat, 2008, p.171).

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Abbreviations

ABD: All but Dissertation
AIF: Academic Innovation Fund
AVPII: Associate Vice-President Indigenous Initiatives
BOG: Board of Governors
CIKL: Centre for Indigenous Knowledges and Languages
CIS: Confirmed Indigenous students
CISS: Centre for Indigenous Student Services
CRC: Canada Research Chair
DEDI: Decolonizing, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
EDI: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
EPC: Equity, People and Culture
IC: Indigenous Council
IEC: Indigenous Education Council
IF: Indigenous Framework
IFR: Indigenous Framework Review
ISAY: Indigenous Student Association at York
ISSF: Indigenous Student Success Fund
ITLF: Indigeneity in Teaching and Learning Fund
IREB: Indigenous Research Ethics Board
IRO: Indigenous Research Officer
KGN: Kendaasowin Gchi-Naakinigewin
OISA: Osgoode Indigenous Student Association
ONWA: Ontario Native Women's Association
OFIFC: Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres
POLARIS: Places of Online Learning for the Adjudication of Researchers Inclusively and Supportively
SSHRC: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council
SISID: Student Information System Identification
VPRI: Vice-President Research & Innovation
KGN: Kendaasowin Gchi-Naakinigewin
TDSB: Toronto District School Board
YRC: York Research Chair
YFS: York Federation of Students
UAP: University Academic Plan

Introduction

Overview and Context

Significant progress has been made since the Indigenous Council (IC) endorsed the Indigenous Framework (IF) for York University in March of 2017. This review, led by the Associate Vice-President Indigenous Initiatives (AVPII), aims to document the University's progress in responding to the framework. The review process involved closely examining what has been accomplished, to identify areas of strength and potential growth, as well as to uncover challenges and barriers to achieving positive change. This review is meant to inform the next phase of work, which will focus on supporting the Indigenous community at York in articulating a vision for the future and proposing an action plan to accomplish the vision.

The IF is not a stand-alone document but a comprehensive strategy that aligns with the University's distinct values, traditions, history and vision. It directly responds to and supports the [University Academic Plan \(UAP\) 2020-25](#), the [Decolonizing, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy \(DEDI\) 2023-28](#) and the [Sustainability Strategy \(2017\)](#). Moreover, it resonates with broader initiatives within the post-secondary education system in Ontario and across Canada, including the Principles on Indigenous Education [developed by Universities Canada](#) in 2015.

The Indigenous Framework Review (IFR) is supported by a subcommittee of the IC formed in June 2022. The committee consists of Kenzie Allen, Rebecca Beaulne-Stuebing, Ruth Green, Nick Ruest and Randy Pitawanakwat. In September 2022, Associate Vice-President Indigenous Initiatives Susan Dion joined the committee and took on responsibility for leading the review and writing this report. The AVPII department staff, Kira Popova and Dayna Towers, provided substantive assistance with the review and preparation of this report.

The IFR subcommittee engaged with key constituents, including Indigenous students, faculty, staff and administration members. This collaborative approach ensured that diverse perspectives were considered. The subcommittee collected and reviewed data, and in June 2023 it shared a preliminary presentation with the IC, reflecting the collective efforts and insights.

During the 2023-24 academic year, AVPII continued to work on preparing this report. While the review is organized according to the 10 stated principles of the IF, the overlapping and intertwined nature of the principles required some decision-making by the report's writers. Relevant chapters were sent to VPs and AVPs for review. Additionally, in June-July of 2024 individual members of the IC reviewed the report. Each chapter concludes with a Summary and Key Considerations to inform the next phase of work, which will address visioning for the future.

CHAPTER ONE

Indigenous Framework Principle One: Expand the Role of the Indigenous Council

1.1 Background and Current Context

The IC was established in 2002 as a result of advocacy by a group of Indigenous graduate and undergraduate students and supported by then Assistant Professor Susan Dion. This advocacy group was concerned by the lack of Indigenous student services at York. Indigenous students brought the Indigenous Student Success Fund (ISSF) for Colleges and Universities to the attention of then President Lorna Marsden. With support from the president's office, York submitted an application to the Indigenous Education Branch of the Ministry of Colleges and Universities for funding to hire the first Indigenous counsellor at the University.

The Ministry of Colleges and Universities requires post-secondary institutions that accept funding for the provision of Indigenous Student Services to take the following steps:

- Maintain an Indigenous Education Council (IEC)¹ to ensure that Indigenous people are regularly and consistently engaged in decision-making within the institution: Institutions should ensure that representatives from Indigenous communities and organizations have direct access to the University Board of Governors and the University Senate (e.g. by reserving a seat on the board of governors for an Indigenous representative or through representation from the president as a member of the IEC).
- Maintain at least one Indigenous counsellor position (broadly defined, Indigenous counselling includes culturally sensitive counselling, mentoring, clinical counselling services and other supports for Indigenous learners).
- Establish and maintain public access to information on the institutional website about the IEC (e.g. membership, terms of reference, minutes etc.) and how to contact the council.
- Report on the performance and outcomes of ISSF-funded activities using ministry-supplied templates. These templates include opportunities to share success stories with the ministry and the post-secondary education sector.

The IC includes Indigenous faculty, staff and students representing a diversity of Indigenous People and members of the University community. It provides guidance to the University on Indigenous initiatives, issues and concerns.

While this review is focused on the six years following the establishment of the IF, 2017-23, it is crucial to consider the history of the IC and where the University stands in its relationship to decolonizing and indigenizing. York University, the third-largest in Canada, was established in 1959 with deep commitments to social justice and a particular interest in serving diverse student populations. In 2002, it was one of the few universities in Ontario that still needed to access funds to support Indigenous students. In the 22 years following the

¹ At York the Indigenous Education Council is referred to as the Indigenous Council.

establishment of the IC and the hiring of the first Indigenous counsellor, substantive progress has been made. The IC has played a significant role in supporting that progress.

1.2 Additional Leadership Positions

a) Special Advisor to the President on Indigenous Initiatives

In November 2017, Professor Ruth Green was appointed special advisor to the president, in line with the IF's community engagement process and implementation. The appointment furthered the University's commitment to equity and social justice while supporting the development of partnerships and collaborations with Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members. Further, the development of this role will support the advancement of Indigenous students, staff and faculty at York and contribute to the University's reconciliation commitment.

b) The Associate Vice-President Indigenous Initiatives

The AVPII position was announced in the spring of 2021. The position was created to provide dynamic, visionary and collaborative senior leadership to support the growth of York University's Indigenous portfolio. This includes providing leadership in supporting the IC and the implementation of Indigenous strategic directions as embedded in the IF, the new UAP2020-25, the Strategic Research Plan (2018-23) and the Decolonizing Research Administration Report (2019). The AVPII is expected to develop and nurture relationships across the University and the external community with the goals of Indigenization, Reconciliation and Decolonization. The AVP II will leverage the York University Indigenous Framework and lead a regular review of institutional progress.

c) Special Advisor to the Dean of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies

This position was established in July of 2022. Professor Ruth Green began a term as special advisor on Indigenous Issues to the dean of the Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies (LA&PS). This role emphasizes incorporating Indigenous teaching and learning methods to build a safer space for students, staff and faculty. Green reports to the dean on recruiting and retaining Indigenous students and faculty, advises about hiring Indigenous faculty and staff and liaises with the AVPII. The role brings Indigenous voices into the foreground of important issues and decisions that benefit the community at York and the community at large. This appointment is in line with the IF.

1.3 Restructuring of the Indigenous Council

During the 2018-19 academic year, efforts were made to restructure the IC. This involved changes to the council's function and organization. Two groups, the Constituency Groups and the Responsibility Groups, were created and both represented by an executive committee as described in the 2018 Terms of Reference (2018 TOR). With limited success, the revised vision of the council operated during the 2019-20 and the 2020-21 academic years; however, due to overwhelming demands on council members' time in September 2021, the IC reverted to meeting once a month as a single group and operating according to the 2017 Terms of Reference (2017 TOR).

1.4 Current Structure, Membership and Operations

The IC’s mandate is to support and build reciprocal relationships between Indigenous communities and York University in the interests of expanding all aspects of the Indigenous presence at York. Its purpose is to advocate for Indigenous people to have greater access, input and opportunities for higher education to the fullest extent possible.

Since September 2021, the IC has met once a month as a single group. The first 75 to 90 minutes of council meetings are reserved for Indigenous members only. During the second part of the meeting, non-Indigenous council members are invited to join. Hybrid meetings were held during the 2021-22 and 2022-23 academic years.

The council’s governance model includes members of York’s senior administration, its Indigenous constituency and broader Indigenous communities. While both Indigenous communities and the University at large are represented, the majority of council members are Indigenous.

Indigenous Council Membership 2023-24 Academic Year	
Indigenous community representatives	3
Student group ISAY	1
Student group OISA	2
Student group graduate representatives	0
Staff	5
Faculty (including librarians and seconded)	23
Senior administration (AVPII)	1
University representation (non-Indigenous senior administration and other)	11

Table 1.2

The council serves as an important meeting place for Indigenous community members, including faculty, staff and students, who appreciate the space and place to connect with each other, hear each other’s perspectives and address concerns. However, members have raised questions about the council’s role and responsibilities as an advisory council.

The table below reflects key elements of council, reflecting consistency and inconsistency between what is required by the provincial guidelines, what is stated in the current terms of reference and how the IC currently operates.

	Provincial Guideline	Indigenous Council TOR	Actual
Access to board of governors and the senate	Institutions should ensure that representatives from Indigenous communities and organizations have direct access to the BOG and the senate.	X	As of 2017, Professor Ruth Green has been a member of senate and senate's representative on the BOG since 2023. In 2023, K. Murry (Kanien'kehá:ka) joined the BOG.
Counsellor	Maintain at least one.	X	The Indigenous counsellor is exempt from Indigenous-only discussions. ²
Decision-making	Indigenous people are consistently and regularly engaged in decision-making within the institution.	Decisions will be made by consensus, whereby everyone either agrees with the decision or, if not in full agreement, can abide by the decision made by the other members of the IC.	Most decisions are arrived at by consensus. However, as not all IC members attend every single meeting, consensus is with members present.
Performance review	The performance of the council will be reviewed as required.	The performance of the council will be reviewed as required.	A performance review is overdue.
AEC Executive Committee		The AEC Executive Committee is a working group that will meet as needed and be responsible for carrying out the TOR.	X
Co-chairs		The council shall appoint two co-chairs, one from the Indigenous community and one from the University.	AVPII is currently the Chair.
Academic director		The academic director to the IC is responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acting as liaison between academic departments across the University and the IC. Addressing academic issues, supporting students and responding to concerns relating to the Centre for Aboriginal Students Services (CASS) and the University. Engaging in diverse academic projects relating to CASS and the IC. 	The academic director position no longer exists. The AVPII position was established in 2021.

² The current Indigenous Counsellor is an Indigenous person from South America and thus according to IC policy is unable to attend Indigenous Only Council meetings.

	Provincial Guideline	Indigenous Council TOR	Actual
Membership responsibilities		<p>Members are responsible for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • championing the mission of the IC • attending and participating at the meetings; • sitting on IC committees and fully committing to the work of the IC and its committees; reading the minutes of the last meeting in advance of the meeting at which they will be approved; • reading the agenda for the upcoming meeting and seeking any clarification prior to meeting; • completing any council business agreed to by the deadline or meeting indicated; • responding promptly to emails or other correspondence with regard to council business; • regularly reporting to their constituencies and reporting back to the council as relevant. 	<p>The majority of Indigenous members of council are overwhelmed with commitments, and while attendance is good, many members express concern with their lack of time and energy to fully meet these expectations.</p>
Meetings and agendas		<p>The IC shall meet six times a year or more, depending on what the co-chairs deem necessary and appropriate. The six main meetings will be scheduled for early September, October, December, late January, mid-March and May.</p>	<p>The IC generally meets once a month during the fall-winter academic terms.</p>
TOR approval history		<p>The 2018 TOR were approved in 2019. Currently, the IC is relying on the 2017 TOR.</p>	<p>Review and approval of the TOR is overdue.</p>

Table 1.2C

A review of IC minutes shows that the council continues to address key issues, including:

- support for Indigenous Students Association of York (ISAY) events, including Pow Wow;
- the impact of fraudulent claims on Indigenous identity;
- Indigenous People’s Belonging Verification Policy;
- approval of and support for the Indigenous Research Ethics Board;
- support of Indigenous-specific hiring committees; and
- support for the Centre for Indigenous Student Services.

On Sept. 1, 2021, the role of associate vice-president of Indigenous Initiatives began, and the AVPII assumed the role of IC co-chair, serving alongside Sean Hillier, who served as IC co-chair from 2019 to 2023. Hillier stepped down in June 2023, and the co-chair position has remained empty since then.

1.5 Summary and Key Considerations Informing Phase Two

The IC, established in 2002 as a result of advocacy by Indigenous students, is long overdue for a review and updates to its TOR. Consideration is needed for how the IC could improve on the consistency and/or inconsistency between what is required by the provincial guidelines, what is stated in the TOR and how the IC operates. Revisions must be made with consideration for the demands placed on members and the goals and aspirations of IC members.



CHAPTER TWO

Indigenous Framework Principle Two: Increase the Number of Indigenous Faculty

As of July 1, 2023, there were 23 tenured or tenure-stream faculty members at York University. Since the endorsement of the IF, proactive steps have been taken to increase Indigenous faculty representation, including revisions to search processes and coaching for committees to enhance their understanding of Indigenous hiring practices. This facilitates consistency in identifying eligible candidates for dedicated Indigenous faculty positions.

From July 1, 2017, to July 1, 2023, 11 Indigenous faculty members were hired into tenure-track positions across the University. These hires were supported by the 2018-21 collective agreement, which set targets for Indigenous faculty hires. Increases to the Indigenous faculty complement benefit Indigenous students and enrich the educational environment for all learners by bringing diverse Indigenous perspectives, cultures and knowledges to the University.

While progress has been made, it is important to remember the ongoing challenges. Indigenous people, who make up five per cent of the Canadian population, continue to face significant educational disparities, particularly regarding representation among faculty in academic institutions. Systemic barriers have led to Indigenous people constituting only 2.5 per cent of the academic position pool (2021), a statistic that underscores the urgent need to continue a commitment to increasing Indigenous faculty representation.

2.1 Indigenous Faculty Hiring, History and Current Context

During the six years following the endorsement of the IF, York has experienced relative success in hiring Indigenous faculty. Understanding the experiences and perspectives of IF members was a key priority for the review team. Table 2.2A reflects the history of Indigenous hires as of July 1, 2023. The table shows steady growth in the IF complement across the University. Table 2.2B shows diversity among faculty and their teaching and research areas.

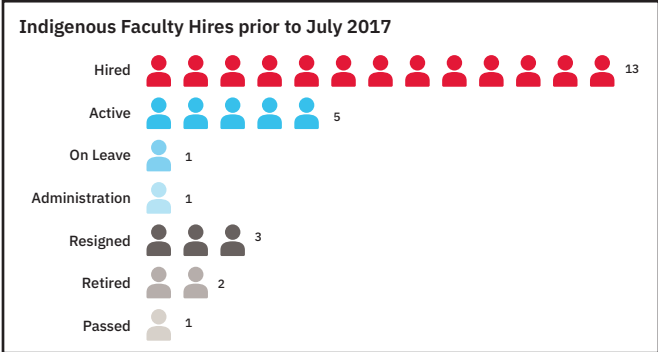
The History of Indigenous Faculty Hires at York (*Indicates NOT a Dedicated Indigenous Hire)									
	Hires up to 2016	July 1, 2017	July 1, 2018	July 1, 2019	July 1, 2020	July 1, 2021	July 1, 2022	July 1, 2023	Total
AMPD	M. Greyeyes R. Hill	Failed, R/O		Failed, R/O	Failed, R/O	A. Pechawis			3
EDUCATION	S. Dion			Failed R/O	D. Manning	R. Beaulne-Stuebing K. Brant-Birioukov		J. Hupfield	5
EUC	P. Cole L. Myers								2

The History of Indigenous Faculty Hires at York (*Indicates NOT a Dedicated Indigenous Hire)									
	Hires up to 2016	July 1, 2017	July 1, 2018	July 1, 2019	July 1, 2020	July 1, 2021	July 1, 2022	July 1, 2023	Total
HEALTH, Kinesiology				A. Day					1
HEALTH, Nursing						Failed			0
HEALTH, SHPM			S. Hillier*						1
LAPS, Anthro				Failed					0
LAPS, English				K. Allen					1
LAPS, Equity Studies	D. McNab			J.Thistle					2
LAPS GSWS				A. Alook*				Failed	1
LAPS History					A. Corbiere*				1
LAPS, Humanities	D. Doxtator B. Lawrence			B. Pitawanakwat*			J. Green		4
LAPS, SPPA								BJ. Virtue	1
LAPS, Law & Society				Failed, R/O	L. Baskatawang				1
LAPS Social Work	R. Green	N. Penak							2
LAPS, Sociology					Failed, R/O	W. Geniusz			1
HEALTH, Psych						Failed	N. Muir		1
LIB	S. Allison-Cassin N. Ruest					Failed, R/O	C. Coady		3
SCIENCE, NATS							Failed		
SCIENCE, Biology							Failed, R/O	Search in progress	
OSGOODE	D. McGregor S. Daum Shanks	K. Drake*		J. Hewitt*					4
GLENDON, Sociology		Y Allard-Tremblay			M. Chacaby				2
GLENDON, French							Failed		
GLENDON, Sociology							Failed, R/O	Failed	
(Total hires per year)	13	3 60**	1 76	6 129	4 78	4 74	3 75	2 76	36

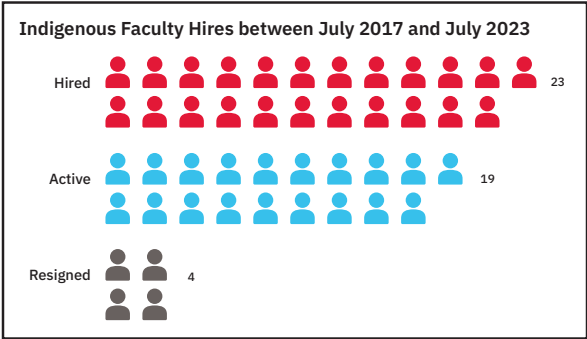
Table 2.1A

** The number in red indicates total number of non-Indigenous faculty tenure stream hires.

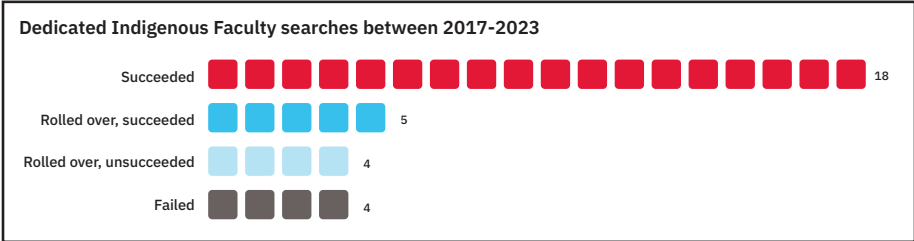
Prior to the IF, York had hired a total of 13 Indigenous faculty members, of whom seven are still present at the University. Of the six no longer at York, three have resigned, two have retired, and one has passed to the spirit world.



In the six years following the approval of the IF, York hired 23 Indigenous faculty members, of whom 19 remain and four have resigned.



In the six years following the approval of the IF, York launched 39 dedicated Indigenous faculty searches, with a total of 22 successful searches. In two cases (Education 2020-21 and LA&PS Humanities, 2021-22), offers were made to two candidates. In Education, two hires were successfully negotiated. In Humanities, one hire was successfully negotiated. This resulted in 23 successful Indigenous hires. As of July 1, 2023, one search from the 2022-23 hiring cycle was still active. Of the 14 failed searches, nine were rolled over, and thus far four have ultimately succeeded.



York University currently has 23 active Indigenous faculty members. Indigenous people make up 1.4 per cent of the total tenure-stream faculty at York and five per cent of the Canadian population. This data supports the need for an ongoing commitment to increase the Indigenous complement through dedicated Indigenous hires.

Additionally, the data suggest that at York two specific considerations have contributed to successful dedicated Indigenous hires. First, typically, in tenure-stream hiring all but dissertation (ABD) applicants are rarely considered. Of the total 27 Indigenous scholars hired, 11 were hired ABD, and four did not require PhDs (LIB/EUC/AMPD/SPPA).

ABD hires at York include the following:

- 1) D. Doxtator hired 1995, PhD achieved in 1996 (died in 1998);
- 2) P. Cole hired in 1999; PhD achieved in 2000, resigned in 2006;
- 3) S. Dion hired in 2001; PhD achieved in 2002;
- 4) R. Green hired in 2015; PhD achieved in 2016;
- 5) S. Hillier hired in 2018; PhD achieved in 2019;
- 6) D.M. Allen hired in 2019; PhD achieved in 2020;
- 7) J. Thistle hired in 2019; PhD in progress (plans to defend July 2024);
- 8) A. Day hired in 2019; PhD achieved in 2022;
- 9) M. Chacaby hired in 2020; PhD achieved in 2023;
- 10) K. Brant-Birioukov hired in 2021; PhD achieved in 2021;
- 11) R. Beaulne-Stuebing hired in 2021; PhD achieved in 2022.

Most of the ABD Indigenous hires achieved their PhDs within 24 months, have transitioned successfully into their academic positions, and have achieved tenure or are on track to do so as expected. When hiring for tenure-stream positions, accepted practice among universities is to refrain from hiring their own graduates. Of the 27-tenured or tenure-stream Indigenous hires at York University, six earned their PhDs at York. Supporting hiring committees, being open to ABD candidates, recognizing alternative pathways to tenure-track faculty positions and a willingness to hire York graduates have contributed to success in dedicated Indigenous searches.

Faculty	Community	Faculty Department	Research Focus
Allen, Kenzie	Oneida Nation of Wisconsin	LA&PS English	Creative writing and Indigenous literatures
Alook, Angele	Bigstone Cree Nation in Treaty 8 Territory	LA&PS GSWS	Indigenous feminism, research methodologies, cultural identity and sociology of family and work, gender and sexuality, climate justice and just transition and the political economy of oil
Beaulne-Stuebing, Rebecca	Métis, Sault Ste. Marie Métis, MNO	EDUCATION	Indigenous women and Two-Spirit theorizing grief work, medicines and healing from settler colonialism
Brant-Birioukov, Kiera	Haudenosaunee, Tyendinaga	EDUCATION	Indigenous thought and knowledge in curriculum studies, teacher education and reconciliatory pedagogies, oral history and language revitalization
Chacaby, Maya	Anishinaabe Opwaaganasiniing	GLENDON Sociology	Ojibwe language and culture, ending Indigenous human trafficking, homelessness and violence against Indigenous women and girls

Faculty	Community	Faculty Department	Research Focus
Coady, Cora	Anishinaabe Mississaugas of the Credit	LIBRARY	Student experience within the academic library and Indigenous information literacy
Corbiere, Alan	Anishinaabe from M'Chigeeng	LA&PS History	Indigenous history in Canada and the U.S., specializing in Anishinaabe history and culture of the northern Great Lakes region in the 18th and 19th centuries
Day, Ashley	Sahtu Dene and Métis of Norman Wells (Tłegóhłj Got'ıne)	HEALTH Kinesiology	Indigenous health and education policy via resurgence, sovereignty and self-determination
Dion, Susan	Lenape/Potawatomi	EDUCATION	Indigenous pedagogy, urban Indigenous being, Lenape language, history and cultural practice
Drake, Karen	Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation	OSGOODE	Canadian law as it affects Indigenous Peoples, Anishinaabe constitutionalism and Indigenous pedagogy within legal education
Geniusz, Wendy	Cree and Métis, descendant from The Pas, Manitoba	LA&PS Sociology	Ojibwe language and culture revitalization
Green, Jeremy	Kanien'kehá:ka, Tyendinaga and Six Nations	LA&PS Humanities	Language acquisition and planning for Indigenous language proficiency and development for Six Nations and other nations and communities
Green, Ruth	Kanien'kehá:ka, Six Nations	LA&PS Social Work	Indigenous Peoples, social work, Indigenous pedagogy, Anti-racist education, Indigenous social work
Hewitt, Jeffery	Cree (mixed), works with Rama First Nation	OSGOODE	Indigenous legal orders and governance, constitutional law, human rights, legal education, business law, art and law and visual legal studies
Hillier, Sean	Qalipu First Nation	HEALTH Policy and Management	Aging, living with HIV and other infectious diseases, One Health, health policy and access to care for Indigenous Peoples
Hupfield, John Waaseyaabin	Anishinaabe, Wasauksing First Nation	EDUCATION	Anishinaabe pedagogy, Indigenous movement and education
Lawrence, Bonita	Mi'kmaw (Acadian and English)	LA&PS Humanities	Issues related to Indigenous identity and governance, equity and racism in Canada
McGregor, Deborah	Anishinaabe, Whitefish River First Nation	OSGOODE	Indigenous knowledge systems and their applications in diverse contexts, including water and environmental governance and justice
Muir, Nicole	Métis	HEALTH Psychology	Colonialism, trauma and victimization, foster care involvement, justice system involvement and violence risk assessment
Myers, Lisa	Ojibwe	EUC	Visual, community, socially engaged and participatory art practices, Indigenous art, curatorial practice, art theory and criticism, food studies
Pechawis, Archer	Cree (European mixed) Mistawasis Nehiyawak, SASK	AMPD	Intersection of Plains Cree culture and digital technology, merging traditional objects such as hand drums with digital video and audio sampling

Faculty	Community	Faculty Department	Research Focus
Pitawanakwat, Brock	Anishinaabe, Whitefish River First Nation	LA&PS Humanities	Indigenous language revitalization, health, history, labour and politics
Ruest, Nick	Mixed ancestry	LIB	Digital assets librarian
Thistle, Jesse	Métis-Cree	LA&PS Equity Studies	Twentieth-century Métis road allowance history in Saskatchewan, Indigenous memoir and autobiography after 2010 and Indigenous homelessness in Canada
Virtue, Bobbi-Jo	Cree, Peguis Community Treaty 1 Territory	LA&PS PPS	Public administration, politics and government, anti-colonial education, Indigenous governance, justice, language revitalization, matriarchs, law, criminal justice

Table 2.1B: *This chart reflects Indigenous faculty research interests.

The Indigenous faculty complement at York includes seven Anishinaabe scholars, three Mohawk scholars, five Cree scholars, five Métis scholars, one Lenape-Potawatomi scholar, one Dene-Métis (NWT) Scholar, one Oneida Scholar, one Mi'kmaw Scholar, and one Scholar who identifies as mixed.

2.2 Hearing the Voices of Indigenous Faculty

Interviews with Indigenous faculty members provide direction for identifying immediate, short-term and long-term goals. See Appendix A for interview questions.

1) What drew you to York University?

- It was important that I could be on my ancestral territory.
- There was enough of a community at York that I would be able to survive as a scholar.
- I felt drawn to the job ad because it spoke to Indigenous pedagogies.

Indigenous scholars are specifically drawn to York for a variety of reasons, including being close to family, community and traditional territory, having attended York as a student. Additionally, York's commitment to social justice and Indigenous initiatives, awareness of the strong Indigenous community and an active IC, also contribute to attracting faculty members to York.

2) What do you enjoy about being an Indigenous faculty member at York?

- Being able to work in my community, working in collaboration with people, makes sense for me. I can attend events and gatherings and see the direct impact of my work. I can see that my effort results in a visible impact.
- The strategic plan in my faculty is already so grounded in equity and inclusivity, not decolonial yet, or with a critical settler colonial lens, yet the faculty is open to reinterpretation, because there is already an equity-based framework in place.
- The sense of community here has reinvigorated me.

For Indigenous academics, being able to live and work close to family and traditional territory is a critical consideration. Faculty also cite the strong sense of community as a primary reason for being at York. They identified as positive factors being part of a university that is increasingly attentive to Indigenous people, willing to act in response to needs and creating opportunities for research. Interviewees cited supportive faculty colleagues as a key factor in their positive experiences of York.

3) What do you find difficult/troubling/concerning about being an Indigenous faculty member at York?

- Every month, the agenda is full, leaving little time to discuss critical items.
- We can recruit Indigenous students, but I want to know that this is an ethical landscape, that there is a place for them to thrive when they get here.
- A lot of administrative work.
- York is trying to decolonize but I feel exploited at times as an Indigenous member.

Demands imposed on Indigenous faculty to do the work of indigenizing and decolonizing at the faculty level and University wide are overwhelming. People are distressed by the expectations of the IC. With too few Indigenous faculty spread across the University, members at the faculty level feel isolated and stressed. There is a shared frustration because of experiences of disconnection between York University's talk about a commitment to decolonizing, indigenizing and social justice and on-the-ground support for initiatives. Expressions of support are of little use if there is a shortage of people to do the work. Indigenous faculty are equally concerned with the low numbers or lack of Indigenous students at York. Serious concerns were raised regarding non-Indigenous colleagues who know so little about Indigenous People, the history of colonialism and the current circumstances confronting Indigenous people. Dominant narratives about the Romantic Mythical Other and the poor, pitiful other continue to inform faculty and staff knowledge and understanding. There is a desire to have stronger connections between York University and urban Indigenous communities in Toronto.

Indigenous faculty members are often asked to take a leadership role in providing Indigenous-focused learning experiences for students. This work is not acknowledged as teaching or service. The identity issue imposed because of fraudulent practices by non-Indigenous people has contributed to some tensions within the community. Indigenous people do not always agree on issues, yet there is an expectation of one unified position from Indigenous communities.

4) What could York University be doing better to support Indigenous faculty?

- Recognize our extensive service contributions.
- It would mean a lot to walk into a classroom and see Indigenous iconography, artwork and images – an eagle staff, a wampum belt. It would mean a great deal to have it there. We are expected to teach it, but it is not physically present.
- Tenure and promotion are huge concerns. Our files are evaluated by peers who may not have an awareness of Indigenous methodologies and knowledges or an understanding of our experiences and perspectives.
- They need to support us, not only use us. IC seems to be a place the University is throwing initiatives at and asking us to do so many things at lightning speed, including for example the research ethics board, the Belonging Verification Committee and the framework review. These are huge initiatives.
- Last-minute requests for an Indigenous partner on SSHRC grants. It's an insult to be asked so late.

Although York has made progress with the hiring of Indigenous faculty during the past six years, increasing the Indigenous faculty complement continues to be an urgent need. In Canada, Indigenous people represent five per cent of the total population. At York, Indigenous faculty represent 1.4 per cent of tenure-stream faculty. A small community of faculty members is being asked to do the work of transforming the University. During our conversations, faculty members identified four key concerns:

- a) **Space:** Indigenous faculty identify the need for an Indigenous-specific space. They need space where they can bring their classes together, a kitchen where they can prepare traditional food, a place to host sacred fires, and a community gathering space.
- b) **Time:** We need time to cultivate community. How will we collaborate if we never have the chance to grow and work together? We need time to network with each other and do meaningful work for each other and the community.
- c) **Educating Faculty and Staff:** Not enough is being done at the University to educate our colleagues (faculty and staff) on our shared history. Before you become a dean, you should have to take a course in decolonization taught by an Indigenous faculty member. Provide courses for faculty. Include a course on colonialism and its impacts in the staff professional development courses.

5) Do you feel supported in your research activities? What more could the University do to support you in accomplishing your activities and goals?

- With the service demands on Indigenous faculty, it is hard to find time to focus on research.
- I feel my research projects are supported.
- Cost centre stuff is complicated. Nobody has sat down and explained it.
- Is the Indigenous research going to be counted, respected and interpreted correctly by T&P committees?

Responses to the question of support for research activities range from “very supported” to “not at all supported.” Generally, faculty responses are organized around three key concerns:

Time: With heavy teaching and service loads, many pre-tenured faculty members identified the lack of time as a key limitation on their ability to focus on their research. Of the 18 Indigenous faculty hired (and still at York) in the past six years, seven were hired ABD, so in addition to their teaching and service demands, many were busy finishing their dissertations and immediately being asked to participate as Indigenous collaborators on their colleagues’ projects, leaving them with little time to focus on developing their own post-dissertation research agendas. Ultimately, Indigenous faculty feel they are called upon to do the work of indigenizing and decolonizing the University. It is extra, over and above what their colleagues are asked to do, and their research suffers.

Mentoring: Pre-tenure Indigenous faculty identified the need for specific mentoring from a senior Indigenous faculty member who would be familiar with the challenges they are confronting – someone who would be able to assist them in developing and operationalizing their research agenda.

Systems support: Many Indigenous faculty identify a need for more post-award-specific administrative support, particularly from someone knowledgeable about Indigenous research methods. This is because navigating research accounting can be a time-consuming challenge. Dedicated research assistants who are familiar with the York systems would enable Indigenous faculty to be more responsive to the urgent research needs within communities. Some faculty expressed concerns about the operation of the Indigenous Research Ethics Board.

There are many opportunities for Indigenous faculty to be involved in research serving Indigenous communities, but the challenge is finding time to do the work.

6) Are you aware of the Indigenous Framework? Have you read the framework? If yes, how successful has the University been in accomplishing the framework's goals? What changes do you think need to be made to the framework?

- Yes, somewhat aware.
- I've skimmed it but do not find it particularly useful.
- There are a lot of good people at York working hard to do good work.
- There has been progress on all principles, but these did not happen overnight. There is more to be done under each principle.

Most of the Indigenous faculty members interviewed were aware of the framework. Many felt that while it was a good start, much more needs to be done. Many of those interviewed identified the need for an implementation plan and the creation of benchmarks. Improvements in communication.

7) Any additional comments and feedback you would like to share?

- The Indigenous Teaching and Learning Fund has been incredibly useful. Continue this initiative.
- York needs more Elder presence.
- What is the University doing to encourage faculty colleagues to participate in decolonizing education?
- I have experienced times where things are challenging and difficult. But for the most part I feel I've been able to accomplish my goals and vision.

Indigenous faculty are focused on bringing Indigenous knowledges and perspectives into the University, and they value being able to strengthen students' access to Elders and/or Knowledge Keepers. However, they feel overwhelmed and exhausted by the work of decolonizing the institution.

2.3 Summary and Key Considerations Informing Phase Two

Following the endorsement of the IF, York has experienced relative success in hiring Indigenous faculty, although issues remain, including:

- demands on Indigenous faculty to lead indigenizing and decolonizing efforts;
- lack of opportunities for teaching Indigenous-focused courses;
- low numbers of Indigenous students;
- varying levels of support for research activities;
- lack of time for writing and research due to workload issues; and
- lack of support for tenure and promotion.

Most disconcerting is the extent to which Indigenous faculty experience feelings of isolation and exploitation. They have expressed the need for implementation plans and benchmarks aligned with the IF, as well as improvements in communication and consistent progress across the framework's goals. There is an active

need for continued efforts to increase the Indigenous faculty complement, and evidence points to the need to recognize that accomplishing this goal requires consistent effort.

During discussions at the IC meeting on May 20, 2023, members confirmed that the purpose of dedicated Indigenous hires is not only to increase the number of Indigenous scholars at York, but to ensure that Indigenous people’s experiences, perspectives and knowledges are brought into the academy.



CHAPTER THREE

Indigenous Framework Principle Three: Enhance the Recruitment and Academic Success of Indigenous Students

Indigenous students at York University initiated dialogue with the AVPII prior to the start of the IFR. Students wanted to discuss their experiences and perspectives with senior leadership. Once the review was under way, students participated in talking circles with the AVPII and individual interviews with AVPII office assistants, and 53 students completed an online survey. The associate vice-president Indigenous initiatives met with students during the fall of 2023 to provide students with a summary of the data collected. Students felt the results reflected their perspectives, and they expressed interested in participating in the next phase of the review.

3.1 Indigenous Student Enrolment Numbers

There were 286 confirmed Indigenous students (CIS) registered at York during the 2022-23 academic year. The total number of students registered at York in the 2022-23 academic year was 55,700, making the Indigenous student population 0.5 per cent of the total student population at York. Across the province, “More than 16,000 Indigenous students attend Ontario’s public colleges and universities and 1.7 per cent of Ontario’s post-secondary student population are Indigenous” ([Indigenous Education Fact Sheet, 2021](#)). Looking closely at the data and listening to the voices of Indigenous students deepens our understanding of the comparatively low registration numbers at York and provides insight to the university moving forward. It will be especially helpful to IC as we begin developing a plan to guide our work during the next seven years.

CIS Registered at York 2022-23 by Location (Home Address)	
Toronto	103
GTA	61
Ontario	82
Outside of Ontario	27
Reserve Ontario	12
Reserve Outside Ontario	1
Total	286

Table 3.1A

Most Indigenous students are from the city of Toronto and the GTA, initiating specific questions, including: To what extent is York strategically focusing its recruitment efforts? What more might York do to increase its recruitment efforts in the GTA? And in what ways could York be more responsive to Indigenous students from reserve communities?

CIS Registered at York 2022-23 by Faculty	
AMPD	18
Education	15
Engineering	9
EUC	3
Health	44
Glendon	16
LA&PS	95
LAW	14
Science	5
Schulich	2
Graduate (master’s)	31
Graduate (PhD)	33
Other	1
Total	286

Table 3.1B

Most Indigenous students are in the Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies. The number of Indigenous graduate students relative to undergraduate students suggests that York is doing somewhat better at recruiting graduate students.

Knowing where Indigenous students are located within the University makes it possible to do more to engage and support them. Indigenous communities (even those in urban centres) are small, and students talk to one another and to younger sisters, brothers and cousins. Word of mouth is a powerful tool within the broader Indigenous community. Providing strong program-level supports to Indigenous students could ultimately prove to be a successful recruitment strategy.

3.2 Student Survey Data

During the summer of 2023, Indigenous students were invited to participate in an online survey. See Appendix B for survey questions. The survey link was sent to 286 students; 53 (18.5 per cent) completed the survey, many added detailed comments, and 12 (22.7 per cent) agreed to participate in follow-up interviews. Results from the six-question survey provide direction to the Indigenous community for the next phase of work that will focus on developing a vision going forward.

1) Indigenous presence is well represented on campus.

Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.9	18.9%	39.6%	26.4%	13.2%

Table 3.2A

Key Quotes

- I really appreciated being connected to CISS and CIKL as soon as I was accepted to York.
- Indigenous presence to me means Indigenous architecture, art, safe places for ceremony, gathering, smudging, land-based learning etc. When I walk around York, I do not see any of this.
- I find it somewhat disappointing that there are no Indigenous names on buildings or roads.
- Being First Nations, I find comfort when I see familiar symbols, colours and words that connect to culture.

Discussion

While 39.6 per cent of students are neutral on this question, only 20.8 per cent of students somewhat to strongly agree that Indigenous presence is well represented on campus. Indigenous students are looking for presence, and while they find it in specific places, including at the Centre for Indigenous Student Services (CISS) and the Indigenous Student Association at York (ISAY), this is insufficient. Students offered suggestions for increasing presence, including the use of art by students or alumni, colours of the medicine wheel and signage that reflects Indigenous Peoples’ connection to land and water. Importantly, students report that physical representation provides comfort and safety.

2) Services for Indigenous students are easily accessible at York University.

Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
9.4%	32.1%	28.3%	24.5%	5.7%

Table 3.2B

Key Quotes

- More Elders, more traditional teachings, more language accessibility.

- The University needs to – at minimum – adequately fund CISS so it can continue to support students and create cultural opportunities without being constrained by a shoestring budget.
- More resources to help accessing resources such as financial aid and more Indigenous Studies courses.
- Mental health support, financial support and support regarding the experience of living alone at university for the first time.

Discussion

Only 41.5 percent of students surveyed strongly to somewhat strongly agree that services at York are easily accessible. Students identify three problems: i) locating and accessing existing services, ii) inadequately supported existing services and iii) the need for increased services. There is a direct link between York’s capacity to attract Indigenous students and the provision of Indigenous-specific services, including courses and programs. Indigenous-specific courses, cohorts and programs in the Faculty of Education and at Osgoode provide excellent models. Currently, both Psychology and Nursing have expressed interest in creating Indigenous-specific cohorts and/or streams.

3) Indigenous history, languages, knowledges and cultures are included in my courses.

Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
13.2%	15.1%	18.9%	28.3%	24.5%

Table 3.2C

Key Quotes

- The only time Indigenous culture has been included in one of my courses is in an Indigenous course taught by an Indigenous professor.
- At this stage, the representation in coursework is superficial and tokenistic.
- A course that was about post-colonialism and borders did not include any Indigenous contact, speakers or presenters.
- Indigenous content is still a one-day thing or small side note in my courses.
- Often Indigenous Peoples are absent, a footnote or noted at contact, and nothing contemporary is included.

Discussion

Indigenous students express frustration with the lack of content that reflects Indigenous people’s experiences and perspectives in their courses. Only 28.3 per cent of students somewhat to strongly agree with the statement that Indigenous language, history, knowledges and cultures are included in their courses.

4) Articles written by Indigenous authors have been included in my assigned readings.

Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
15.1%	30.2%	18.9%	30.2%	15.1%

Table 3.2D

Key Quotes

- Again, it needs to be meaningful and relevant. A diversity of Indigenous voices is also needed.
- I and many other Indigenous students had to essentially strong-arm our program core curriculum to include our histories and to stop calling us “the Natives.”
- My experience is that it is up to me, a student, to provide those readings to faculty. I’ve been asked that I do the work to make sure there are Indigenous readings and content.

Discussion

Less than half of students (45.3 per cent) somewhat to strongly agreed that articles written by Indigenous authors are included in their assigned readings in courses. Indigenous students are becoming increasingly aware of their right to have Indigenous perspectives included in their courses across programs. Students are also aware that it is not their responsibility to identify and integrate appropriate content into the syllabus.

5) Access to courses taught by Indigenous faculty are available in my department/program.

Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
7.5%	15.1%	18.9%	24.5%	34%

Table 3.2E

Key Quotes

- There is one professor who teaches two courses.
- I’ve had one, and other Indigenous courses taught by non-Indigenous folks.
- My Indigenous and the Canadian Law course was instructed by a white woman.
- Only one Indigenous professor in the entire faculty.

Discussion

When asked about access to courses taught by Indigenous faculty in their department, 22.6 per cent of students somewhat to strongly agreed. Indigenous students want access to courses taught by Indigenous faculty. Students are aware of the low numbers of Indigenous faculty at York, which have an impact on their learning experiences.

6) Indigenous student success is well supported at York University.

Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5.7%	30.2%	37.7%	13.2%	13.2%

Table 3.2F

Key Quotes

- The Indigenous graduate programs were important to my success. I hope those continue. I appreciate the cultural teachings that were offered and that I participated in.
- CISS and the Indigenous faculty and staff are great supports for Indigenous students.
- I will always believe you need to support Indigenous student success more. It needs to become a mainstay, a household phrase used throughout the academy, to ensure we are supported through our research, in our position within the academy and in academia.
- Have yet to see anything regarding opportunities for success or celebrated students and accomplishments anywhere at York in three years.

Discussion

When asked if Indigenous student success is well supported at York University, 35.9 per cent of students surveyed somewhat to strongly agreed. This indicates that the University is achieving some success in providing supports to Indigenous students. However, much more needs to be done, specifically in connecting students to the supports available and in ensuring that those who deliver support services are doing so in culturally responsive ways.

3.3 Learning from the Student Interviews

Indigenous students who completed the online survey were invited to participate in an individual follow-up interview. The interviews were conducted by support staff in the Department of Indigenous Initiatives. See Appendix C for interview questions.

1) What do you enjoy about being a part of the Indigenous community at York?

- It was important for me to be able to connect with other Indigenous students to meet and talk about challenges, topics that were very relevant to our work.
- I’m urban Indigenous, and it was great to meet new people.
- I like that York has its own Pow Wow. Bringing culture to the institution is important to me.
- Being at York, I am responsible for bringing Indigenous knowledges, experiences and perspectives to the University, and my cohort is very open to learning and listening to me. I see a great opportunity to share knowledge.

Events that bring Indigenous students together are critical to students’ positive experience of York. They enjoy meeting other Indigenous students through CISS, ISAY, CIKL (Centre for Indigenous Knowledges and

Languages) and other Indigenous-specific events. These include lectures, film screenings, presentations, cultural activities, songs and stories being shared and events that get students out on the land. Having space at CISS, CIKL and ISAY provides opportunities for Indigenous students to be able to talk about issues and concerns, make connections and strengthen relationships, without having non-Indigenous people around. Having a safe space to participate in conversations to work through concepts and ideas and to hear about how other Indigenous students are working through challenges of being in university is critical. Developing relationships and having those networks are important to Indigenous student success.

For some students, representing Indigenous people on campus, in their program and in their classes is important. Many students are aware that most Canadians do not know very much about Indigenous Peoples, histories, cultures and concerns. For some students, sharing that knowledge and contributing to educating others is a positive experience.

2) What drew you to York University?

- It was recommended by a mentor.
- I think it was when Deb McGregor was the director of CIKL; I think she gave me the poster with the Master of Education Indigenous cohort at York.
- Information panels were informative.

Students identify specific programs that draw them to York, including the Global Health program, the courses, cohorts and programs in the Faculty of Education, the Indigenous Law program and Indigenous Studies. They expressed appreciation for programs that bring Indigenous students together where they can share their knowledge and learn in collaboration with each other. Being able to learn from, work with and build relationships with Indigenous faculty, students and community members is appealing to Indigenous students. It makes attending university a less alienating experience.

Support from Indigenous faculty members is key, as is an admissions policy that takes into consideration students' varied life experiences. This contributes to their confidence in applying to and attending York. The University's Toronto location and its reputation as a university with a diverse student and faculty population with a commitment to social justice were positive points for many students. Relationships between faculty and students are positive. Students choose York because they see future opportunities.

3) What do you find troubling or concerning about being an Indigenous student at York?

- I didn't find Indigenous presence prominent on campus or in my classes.
- We need to get more of us in the University to show we have something to share. Other universities can do it. York is not doing it well enough.
- Throughout my tenure at York, I ran into a lot of admin issues, specifically because I was an Indigenous student.
- I work on projects and think about the UNDRIP and self-determination. I work with my own community very deeply, am very interested and passionate about Indigenous sovereignty and self-governance.

Students identified multiple sources of frustration, including difficulty in locating Indigenous services, lack of presence and lack of Indigenous content in their courses. They see the possibility for a lot of improvement but do not see it happening. They are concerned with the lack of knowledge and understanding of Indigenous people's experiences and perspectives on the part of non-Indigenous students and faculty. Students often end

up being the ones responsible for bringing Indigenous content to their classes. To a certain extent, students accept this responsibility, but it can be exhausting, and it intrudes on their learning. The Indigenous student double bind (Dion, 2024) exists because as much as students want to have Indigenous material in their courses, many find it difficult when they are expected to do the teaching.

Many Indigenous students experience frustration with the lack of knowledge and understanding on the part of staff in the registrar's office, academic advising and admissions. Across the University, staff do not act with understanding and compassion for the challenges Indigenous students experience, including the constant presence of racism and discrimination, which is exacerbated by economic challenges. Students would like to see increased partnerships with Indigenous communities to explore ideas for increasing the presence of Indigenous architecture and design and acknowledgement of Indigenous knowledge systems. They also suggest that access to funding to attend conferences and gatherings of Indigenous people would help to address the lack of access at York.

Students expressed concern about – but also the need for – a verification process, understanding and supporting that Indigenous-specific opportunities must be for students whose belonging has been verified.

4) What could York be doing better to support Indigenous students?

- Better, more creative ways to connect with students on different levels.
- More supports for students coping with culture shock, especially for those coming from reserve communities.
- More support for those of us who want to consider graduate school. It was daunting. It was hard filling out applications for funds. Something like a workshop or a mentorship.

Students want to see York do more for Indigenous students from reserve communities. York has so much to offer, yet it is not doing enough in service of Indigenous students. It requires a lot of commitment to think about reserve communities and what people need. The University needs to work to build programs that support opportunities for more Indigenous students to participate in post-secondary education that is grounded in Indigenous world views, knowledges, cultural practices, land-based learning, science and math.

5) Are you aware of and have you read the Indigenous Framework for York University: A guide to action?

- From what I've seen, it seems they're doing a good job at this.
- Programs should focus on proactive recruitment of Indigenous students, the admissions process, financial accessibility, academic supports and wellness of Indigenous undergraduate and graduate students.
- Improve communications with secondary schools in the GTA. Many Indigenous students simply do not know that university is an option for them. They do not know that funding and academic supports are available. Improve the website and provide more information for students. It needs to be less a barrier and more an invitation.

Students suggest that York needs to consider Indigenous-specific strategies for recruiting and retaining Indigenous students. From their perspective, York needs to have a more tailored approach. That approach would include opportunities for conversations with secondary school students who want to go to university but just don't have the opportunity. Students remind us that for many Indigenous people, school was a terrible experience. Education is changing, yet based on their experiences many young adults do not think that institutions of formal schooling are a place for them.

Many young Indigenous people would benefit from hearing stories from first- and second-year Indigenous students who can share their stories of positive experiences at university. Navigating York systems can be extremely frustrating, so creating connections with people who know how to navigate the systems and be mentors and allies can have such a positive impact on students.

6) **A) Do you have any additional comments and feedback you would like to share?**

B) Would you consider York University for graduate studies?

- I just want to part of a positive change at York. I see there is real promise, and for me York is making progress.
- I'm tired of feeling like I'm giving up something or compromising because I'm Indigenous.
- I appreciate the fact that the Indigenous Initiatives Division wants to hear my input, and I think together we can make some real change.
- York administration needs to do better.

Many students expressed an interest in pursuing graduate studies at York, on the condition that York provides financial and academic supports. Students mentioned Indigenous-specific opportunities at Osgoode and in the Faculty of Education as programs they would consider. Some students mentioned other universities they have attended, and in comparison they found York lacking in the provision of services. Students recognize that York is working to improve services for Indigenous students, and they want to see more accomplished. The feeling among students is that York is behind what other universities are doing.

Some students commented on their experiences at Congress 2023 and the opportunities it provided. Students spoke about the ongoing, unsettling feeling of not belonging and questioning if a university can be a positive place for Indigenous people. In conversation with one another, some determined that “we’re here now, and it is our responsibility to change the University.” They recognize the life-changing potential and want to see more Indigenous students have access to university.

3.4 Talking Circles Hosted by the AVPII with Indigenous Students

During the 2023 winter term, the AVPII hosted lunchtime Talking circles with Indigenous students. These lunches provided students with opportunities to share a meal with the AVPII, visit and express their thoughts and concerns about their experiences, retention and successes.

Staff

Although the CISS staff are great and committed to supporting the Indigenous student community, current staffing levels need to be improved to meet the needs of the Indigenous student population. While hiring an Indigenous counsellor has improved the availability of counselling services, the need for an Elder and/or Knowledge Keeper persists.

Space

While students appreciate having a tipi on campus, Skennen'kó:wa Gamig and the CISS space, there is inadequate room to meet community needs. A designated space in the library is a critical requirement to support Indigenous students. When CISS reaches out to students, participation rates increase, but limited

space becomes a challenge. Having a safe, comfortable space that facilitates schoolwork, gatherings, learning opportunities and relaxation is crucial. The existing need is greater than the space available to students.

Students identified the need for easily accessible spaces suitable for:

- quiet study
- attending online meetings
- small group dialogue
- community gatherings

Although students spend time at Skennen'kó:wa Gamig for specific workshops and meetings, it is not centrally located, it does not always have an open schedule, and security is a concern. Students expressed concerns about safety, incidents of robbery and vandalism continue to occur, and Indigenous women feel particularly vulnerable. Students are searching for gathering space in a more centralized location to give them easy access to resources and to each other, faculty and support staff. This is a much-needed space. A centrally located site would make it possible for increased attendance at workshops and drop-in activities before and after classes and during brief intervals in between.

Housing and Financial Support

Indigenous students need housing and financial support. Many are confronting food and housing insecurity. Many cannot rely on parents or extended family for financial support. Many Indigenous people in Canada continue to occupy low socio-economic status, and students who attend university rely on financial support from outside their families.

Technology and Writing

While the computers at CISS were replaced in 2020-21, students told us that they are outdated and often not working, and there are not enough computers to meet students' needs. As well, students require more writing support services.

Indigenous Students Association at York

ISAY requires increased financial support from the University to meet the cost of its initiatives. Specifically, there is a need for both Indigenous financial advisors and easier access to emergency funds and bursaries for Indigenous students. Coordinating the annual Pow Wow is an additional time-consuming challenge each year, with the students being responsible for securing funding.

Courses and Events

To achieve a more comprehensive approach to Indigenous education, there is a need for improved communication of information about what courses Indigenous faculty members will teach each year. For social activities, students suggest movie nights, Indigenous music and active, fun events like cooking classes and ice fishing. Additionally, students are interested in Afro-Indigenous speakers, events and courses.

3.5 Centre for Indigenous Student Services Goals and Accomplishments

by R. Pitawanakwat, Manager CISS

Mission Statement

The Centre for Indigenous Student Services strives to create a sense of belonging and to support the academic, spiritual, physical and emotional well-being of a diverse Indigenous student population.

CISS provides a safe community space that offers culturally appropriate support services and programs to facilitate students' success throughout their post-secondary studies.

Centre for Indigenous Student Services Staff

- manager, Indigenous student services
- cultural programs assistant
- Indigenous recruitment officer
- Traditional counsellor
- receptionist
- one full-time summer work study student
- three part-time fall-winter work study students

CISS Main Programming Areas

- visiting Elders program
- Indigenous sharing circle (mentoring) program
- cultural programming
- Traditional counselling and support
- Indigenous student-focused recruitment and admission support
- collaboration with learning skills and the York Writing Centre for additional supports

What kind of activities happened in 2017-23?

York was one of the host locations for the 2017 North American Indigenous Games. CISS supported the games by offering its Skennen'kó:wa Gamig location as the sacred fire site. Indigenous youth athletes were able to drop by at any time throughout the event to offer their prayers and tobacco.

CISS was unable to host the annual End of Term Festive Feast during COVID-19. In December 2019, CISS offered a festive food hamper initiative for its student membership. Food baskets were delivered to student homes for the Christmas holiday.

In 2018, CISS hosted the first Orientation Day for Incoming Indigenous Students. Orientation had always been part of the annual welcome social in September. At this time, it was decided to separate orientation activities from the welcome social and focus on a specific event for incoming students.

What kind of changeover has happened over six years?

In 2022, CISS transitioned from having a part-time Elder and/or Knowledge Keeper to a permanent full-time Traditional counsellor position to accommodate students’ well-being needs.

Various workshops were offered, including beading and making dreamcatchers, gauntlets, moccasins, medicine bags, jingle dresses, ribbon skirts and hand drums.

Year	Number of workshops
2017-18	32
2018-19	34
2019-20	25
2020-21	32
2021-22	24
2022-23	30

Table 3.5A

3.6 Working with the Office of Institutional Planning and Analysis

The following information pertaining to 2022-23 Indigenous student-related data analysis was provided by the Office of Institutional Planning and Analysis.

- 286 SISID (Student Information System Identification) provided
- one duplicate record
- four additional records removed based on citizenship information
- 278 unique records found in the 2022-23 enrolment reporting file

Entry Level

Entry Level (Direct, Second Entry, Graduate)	
Entry level	Frequency
Direct entry	191
Graduate program	64
Second entry	23

Undergraduate Curriculum Detail

Curriculum Description	
Curriculum description	Frequency
Honours	82
Honours – double major	4
Honours – major/minor	13
Intermediate/senior	2
Junior/intermediate	1
Not applicable	14
Ordinary	34
Primary/junior	6
Specialized honours	57

Sessional Entry Type for Program	
Entry type	Frequency
Continuing	195
Degree change	3
Faculty transfer	1
New	73
Reactivated	5
Reactivated two-year plus	1

Undergraduate Indigenous Students Retention and Graduation

Academic Year	Retention and Graduation Status One Year Later	No. of Students	%
2022	Graduated from York	40	19.51
2022	Not returned to York	39	19.02
2022	Returned to York to take courses	126	61.46
2022	Total	205	100.00

- 19.51 per cent of undergraduate Indigenous students enrolled in the 2022 academic year graduated from York.
- 61.46 per cent of undergraduate Indigenous students enrolled in the 2022 academic year returned to York the following year.

Undergraduate Indigenous Students GPA and Credits Taken

Academic Year	Retention and Graduation Status One Year Later	Sessional GPA	Sessional Credits Taken	Previous Cumulative GPA	Cumulative GPA	Cumulative Credits
2022	Graduated from York	7.27	19.97	7.05	7.17	89.16
2022	Not returned to York	3.10	14.69	5.08	4.02	38.50
2022	Returned to York to take courses	5.84	21.57	6.39	6.13	60.12
2022	Total	5.60	20.03	6.39	5.93	61.46

For the 2022 academic year:

- Indigenous undergraduate students who graduated from York in 2023 had a notable academic performance, with an average sessional GPA of 7.27 in their final year and an average of 19.97 sessional credits. They came into their final year with a strong cumulative GPA of 7.05 and concluded their studies with an even higher cumulative GPA of 7.17, having accrued an average of 89.16 cumulative credits.
- Indigenous undergraduate students who did not return to York in 2023 had a distinctly lower academic performance in comparison. Their average sessional GPA was 3.10, and they had taken an average of 14.69 sessional credits. These students had a previous cumulative GPA of 5.08, which decreased to a cumulative GPA of 4.02 by the time of their last recorded academic activity, with an average of 38.50 cumulative credits.
- Indigenous undergraduates who returned to York in 2023 to continue their coursework displayed a commitment to their studies, with the heavier average sessional credit load of 21.57. Their sessional GPA was a solid 5.84, with a slight decline of cumulative GPA from 6.39 to 6.13. They accumulated an average of 60.12 cumulative credits by the end of the 2022 academic year.

3.6 Summary and Key Considerations Informing Phase Two

In the 2022-23 academic year, York University had 286 confirmed Indigenous students out of 55,700 students, accounting for 0.5 per cent of the student population. Comparatively, Ontario’s post-secondary institutions have a higher Indigenous student representation, at 1.7 per cent. The University’s ability to attract Indigenous students is directly linked to the availability of Indigenous-specific courses and programs, which play a crucial role in recruitment and retention. Recognizing this, the AVPII is actively collaborating with CISS to improve recruitment strategies. This includes a specific focus on the GTA and fostering responsiveness to Indigenous students from reserve communities, with the aim of addressing the low enrolment numbers.

Through the student interviews, talking circles and survey, Indigenous students identified multiple challenges and thoughts around how to address them. Some of those include difficulties in accessing Indigenous-specific services, a lack of Indigenous presence and visibility and a shortage of Indigenous content in academic programs. Students also expressed frustration with the lack of knowledge and understanding on the part of staff in the registrar’s office, academic advising and admissions. They are identifying problems and proposing solutions. Students suggest establishing partnerships with Indigenous communities, increasing access to funding and promoting intergenerational sharing of experiences. They also believe it is essential to create safe spaces for Indigenous students to engage in discussions, network and share knowledge, as this fosters a sense of belonging and reduces feelings of isolation. Additionally, students offered suggestions for increasing presence, including the use of art by students or alumni, the colours of the medicine wheel and signs that reflect Indigenous Peoples’ connection to land and water.



CHAPTER FOUR

Indigenous Framework Principle Four: Expand Indigenous Programming and Curricular Offerings Which Explore Indigenous Life, Cultures and Traditions

York University offers Indigenous-focused programs at Osgoode Hall Law School, in the Faculty of Education and through the Indigenous Studies program in the Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies. In addition to these concentrated options, various courses are available in graduate and undergraduate programs across disciplines. This chapter describes the Indigenous-specific programs and reports on the Indigenous-focused courses available across the University.

4.1 Indigenous Options at Osgoode Hall Law School

Osgoode has a strong history of commitment to Indigenous law studies, community relationships and Indigenous student recruitment, including a required course for all students, an intensive program option and a community-based learning experience.

4.1A Indigenous and Aboriginal Law Requirement

In 2019, Osgoode Law School implemented its first year of a new degree requirement, the Indigenous and Aboriginal Law Requirement, which mandates that all students in the juris doctor (JD) program take one of a group of designated Indigenous law courses. This is in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action, specifically no. 28, which urges law schools to mandate a course on Indigenous peoples and the law. Osgoode Dean Lorne Sossin hailed the new Indigenous Law Requirement as “a genuine watershed moment for legal education at Osgoode and reflects the engagement and commitment of our whole community – with lots of important work and reconciliation discussions to come.” (YFile, April 6, 2018)

4.1B Intensive Program in Indigenous Lands, Resources and Governments

Started in 1993, the Indigenous Lands, Resources and Governance Intensive, one of Osgoode’s flagship experiential programs, provides students with opportunities to study applied legal issues in a specific context; it includes a two-month external placement. The full-semester clinical program, worth the full 15 credits for the semester, is the only one of its kind in North America. It covers various Indigenous rights and self-governance topics, including land claims, natural resources management and treaty rights. It aims to develop students’ skills in community lawyering, critical analysis of legal systems affecting Indigenous Peoples and ethical lawyering in Indigenous contexts.

4.1C Kendaasowin Gchi-Naakinigewin

In 2020, Osgoode implemented its Indigenous academic success program, Kendaasowin Gchi-Naakinigewin (KGN), which means “The Art of Learning Law” in Anishinaabemowin, to support newly admitted Indigenous students. Some critical components of KGN include providing access to many Indigenous mentors, a low teacher-student ratio and a focus on cultural safety and anti-colonialism. (Further details about KGN can be found in chapter six.)

4.1D Anishinaabe Law Camp

Since 2014, Osgoode has held an annual Anishinaabe Law Camp to educate both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students and faculty on Anishinaabe law and Indigenous legal traditions at Neyaashiinigmiing. (Further details about the Law Camp can be found in chapter six.)

4.2 Indigenous Studies Program, Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies

The Indigenous Studies program in the Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies began offering courses in September 2018. The program has a substantial emphasis on experiential learning and has provided students with opportunities to engage in culturally based activities or take a placement course in their fourth year. A standout feature of the program is its distinct focus on urban Indigenous communities, Métis studies and Indigenous-Black relations. The founding coordinator of the Indigenous Studies program, Professor Bonita Lawrence, stressed the importance of addressing urban Indigenous communities and the often-misunderstood concept of “Métisness,” alongside the unique emphasis on Indigenous-Black relations. The Indigenous Studies program aims to instill empowerment in students’ identities while equipping them with the knowledge and skills to advocate for their communities. It embodies a commitment to nurturing a new generation of Indigenous leaders who are poised to make a positive impact within their communities and beyond.

4.3 Wuleelham in the Faculty of Education

Wuleelham is a Lenape word that means “make good tracks.” Rooted in Indigenous knowledges and pedagogies, the Wuleelham courses, cohorts and programs engage participants in learning from Indigenous people’s experiences and perspectives. Options were developed to highlight the specific strengths of urban Indigenous communities. They are not intended to be taken in a linear sequence; instead, students make their own tracks, choosing to participate based on their own timelines and interests. The goal is to provide students with the knowledge and understanding to contribute to community well-being through their chosen career paths. Developed in collaboration with Indigenous scholars and communities, Wuleelham prepares students for a wide variety of careers, including teaching, journalism, public administration, law enforcement, court work, policy work and research on Indigenous experiences.

4.3A Combined Credit Course Indigenous People, Identity and Education

Since 2009, the Faculty of Education has offered a first-year university-level course to Indigenous high school students from the Toronto District School Board (TDSB). Titled Indigenous People, Identity and Education (ED/INDS 1200 3.00), the course is offered during the secondary school winter semester. The purpose of the combined credit course is to establish positive relationships between self-identified Indigenous secondary school students and university. This course has not been offered since 2018, due to a lack of Indigenous faculty availability.

4.3B Master of Education (MEd) – Urban Indigenous Education Cohort

The graduate program in Language, Culture and Teaching offers a cohort-based master of education. This part-time cohort is of particular interest to educators, service providers, artists and others who work with Indigenous people and address Indigenous issues in urban contexts. Students have the opportunity to take courses centred in Indigenous content, drawing on key historical texts and the growing body of Indigenous scholarship, such as Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Decolonizing Research Methodologies.

4.3C PhD Indigenous Education Cohort

Building on the success of the master's cohort in the fall of 2017, Professor Dion and then graduate program director Professor Jen Gilbert held an information session proposing a PhD cohort with a focus on Indigenous Education and Pedagogy. In the fall of 2018, the first cohort of three full-time and two part-time students began their studies. During their first academic year, PhD candidates completed the doctoral seminar together, supporting each other's learning, creating a strong presence and bringing Indigenous perspectives (Anishinaabeg, Métis, Nahua) into the classroom space, to the benefit of all students.

4.3D Waaban – Indigenous Teacher Education Program

The faculty, in collaboration with the TDSB Indigenous Education Centre, offers admission to a special cohort of students who complete the Bachelor of Education degree with a focus on Indigenous world views. Waaban educates a new generation of teachers, preparing them to address the needs of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students, families and communities. Students study in a program grounded in Indigenous knowledges and pedagogies; experience holistic teaching and learning that acknowledges the impacts of colonialism; and learn about contemporary urban, rural and reserve perspectives and teachings from a diversity of nations. They learn from and with Indigenous Elders, educators and contemporary community leaders and draw on the wisdom of ancestral teachings and contemporary leaders to put Indigenous futures into Indigenous hands.

4.4 Overall Success of the Indigenous-Focused Programs

Indigenous-Focused Programs				
Program	Date Established	Average Enrolment Per Year	Average Graduates Per Year	Ongoing
Osgoode program: Indigenous Lands, Resources and Governance	1994	10	10	Yes
Indigenous Studies program	2018	TBC	TBC	Yes
Wüléelham: combined credit course	2009	12	10	No
Wüléelham: urban Indigenous master’s cohort	2012	18	15	Yes
Wüléelham: Indigenous PhD cohort	2018	2-3	One completed Four ABD	Yes
Wüléelham: Waaban Indigenous teacher education program	2019	23	20	Yes

Table 4.4A

4.5 Courses Available Across Faculties That Explore Indigenous Life, Cultures and Traditions

Tracking the number of Indigenous-focused courses available outside the specific specialized offerings described in the previous section proved challenging. The IFR subcommittee scanned the York University website and courses website using the search words “Indigenous,” “Aboriginal,” “Indigenous studies” and “Indigenous courses” and encountered several issues. There is conflicting information about which courses are offered for the fall/winter and summer sessions, as well as conflicting information on various course listing pages. The CIKL page on Indigenous courses shows a different number than the course timetable. Courses that haven’t been taught in several years appear as options from the INDG course offerings page.

In an effort to get a clear picture of course offerings, the subcommittee contacted all faculties to confirm the number of courses with Indigenous content in their respective repositories.

Number of Indigenous-Focused Courses 2022-23									
AMPD	Education	Glendon	Health	LA&PS	Lassonde	Osgoode	EUC	Schulich	Science
1	4	9	5	87	0	10	7	1	1

4.6 Summary and Key Considerations Informing Phase Two

Three faculties across the University that offer Indigenous-focused programs and cohorts create depth of engagement, and courses offered across a range of faculties provide spread. Planning is under way through the Department of Indigenous Initiatives to address gaps and prioritize Indigenous languages, in line with reconciliation goals. Specific programs and initiatives highlighted include those at Osgoode Hall Law School, the Indigenous Studies program in the Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies and the Faculty of Education. The more recent work at the Schulich School of Business demonstrates what is possible with concerted effort, commitment and University-community partnerships. Continuing to expand Indigenous programming; addressing urban Indigenous issues and issues of capacity and limited administrative resources available to Indigenous faculty are key priorities. Fostering Indigenous student success through specialized programs like Kendaasowin Gchi-Naakinigewin and Wuleelham are key steps toward promoting Indigenous voices and knowledges within the university community, supporting reconciliation efforts and empowering Indigenous students.

While it is great to see the impactful initiatives under way in these academic programs, it is crucial to reiterate the challenges faced by those closely involved in running these programs. The limited administrative resources, with only a few faculty members supporting such efforts, pose significant challenges. Considering that LA&PS has a considerable Indigenous student population, it becomes essential to emphasize the capacity issues and stresses associated with managing programs that attract Indigenous students. These challenges are heightened by the additional demands placed on ABD and junior faculty members who are navigating pre-tenure responsibilities. It is important to highlight the pressures experienced by Indigenous faculty, particularly those early in their careers, in effectively fulfilling their academic roles.



CHAPTER FIVE

Indigenous Framework Principle Five: Facilitate Research That is Relevant to Indigenous Life and Respects Indigenous Approaches to Knowledge and Learning

In the years following approval of the IF, supporting Indigenous research continues to be a significant priority for the University. The [Decolonizing Research Administration Report](#), completed by Professor Sean Hillier in 2019, is a key document informing positive changes that include the establishment of the Centre for Indigenous Knowledges and Languages (CIKL), the Indigenous Research Ethics Board (IREB) and the Seed Fund for Indigenous Early Career Researchers; funding for Indigenous-specific postdoctoral fellows; and the establishment of six Indigenous-specific Ontario Graduate Scholarships. Indigenous faculty members working with the support of non-Indigenous colleagues from across the University are supporting this transformative work.

5.1 Decolonizing Research Administration Report and Action Plan

The Division of Research & Innovation recognized that accomplishing Principle Five required a deeper understanding of Indigenous research, the experiences and perspectives of Indigenous researchers, and knowledge of Indigenous communities and Indigenous forms of research dissemination. The Assistant VP Research Strategy and Impact funded Professor Sean Hillier to undertake a minor research project to provide answers to these key concerns. His report *Decolonizing Research Administration: An evaluation of Indigenous Research at York University* (2019) informed the Decolonizing Research Administration Action Plan, which included the following action items. Steps taken in response to the items are listed here:

1) Indigenous faculty must be recognized for their extensive workloads. Service, teaching and research responsibilities must be reasonable, appropriate and meaningful.

In 2022, York launched Places of Online Learning for the Adjudication of Researchers Inclusively and Supportively (POLARIS), an online asynchronous education and learning hub to foster equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in the adjudication of professors' research and their performance and engagement with search committees. POLARIS includes seven modules, each based on the discussions and work of a group of 13 professors and two expert research staff members. The Indigenous-specific module has a focus on fostering understanding of best practices related to the adjudication of Indigenous excellence for hiring, tenure and promotion and award adjudication.

Over the past year, POLARIS 2023 staff have been gathering data and meeting with Indigenous scholars to build an additional module. This module is designed to support non-Indigenous adjudicators and enable them to adjudicate ethically across cultural borders. A message across POLARIS is that adjudicating Indigenous excellence ethically and accurately when you are not Indigenous absolutely requires working to understand and accept the validity and value of Indigenous methodologies and epistemologies. The Indigenous-specific module will be launched in October 2024.

- 2) York must hire a central Indigenous research officer (IRO) and support staff to assist with funding opportunities, collaboration, application processes, navigating administration and pre- and post-award support that is specific to Indigenous faculty members.**

An Indigenous research support specialist job description was approved and banded. The job ad was posted late in the 2023-24 academic year. Additionally, CIKL was launched in 2021 <https://yfile.news.yorku.ca/2020/06/10/senate-approves-two-new-orus-bee-ecology-and-indigenous-knowledges-languages/>. More details about CIKL can be found on page 4. It is important to note here that CIKL received enhanced administrative support and enhanced base funding; and in addition to the director, two associate directors were assigned to this Organized Research Centre (soon after taking on the position of director, the individual took a leave of absence, and one of the associate directors took the position of interim director).

- 3) York and the Vice-President, Research & Innovation (VPRI), must make a public statement entrenching support for Indigenous ways of knowing and being, research and practices. This includes a commitment to improving processes on campus and within Indigenous communities.**

A statement expressing support for Indigenous ways of knowing and being, research and practices was made in May 2022. In the statement, York President Rhonda L. Lenton, Vice-President Research & Innovation Amir Asif and then Vice-President Equity, People and Culture Sheila Cote-Meek acknowledge the value, legitimacy and immense contributions of Indigenous knowledges, languages and ways of knowing to positive societal change. The statement acknowledges the existence of ongoing barriers rooted in colonial policies that hinder Indigenous research and learning. It expresses a commitment to decolonize research, support Indigenous scholars and prioritize Indigenous research in service of Indigenous self-determination and sovereignty goals. Additionally, it expresses a commitment to continuous consultation and collaboration with Indigenous scholars and students to create supportive spaces and promote Indigenous knowledges and languages. The statement can be accessed here: <https://yfile.news.yorku.ca/2022/05/24/a-statement-on-yorks-commitment-to-the-indigenous-framework-and-decolonizing-research/>

- 4) York must work to reconcile Indigenous ways of knowing and being and the ways in which Indigenous research is conducted with its own need for accountability.**

A revised honorarium form is now available, and there is ongoing work with Research Accounting to do further revisions to existing processes to facilitate expense reimbursement and advance cash to Indigenous collaborators. This is needed due to the long-standing challenges involving payment to Indigenous research partners, assistants, and those providing their knowledge, support, and work.

- 5) The Office of Research Services must take a leadership role in assisting non-Indigenous faculty members to engage with Indigenous communities.**

A community engagement tool has been developed, a web designer has been secured, and work is progressing on an Indigenous landing page. Once the landing page is complete, the engagement tool will be easily accessible.

6) York must commit to hiring more Indigenous faculty members.

Indigenous faculty: See page 9 for documentation of Indigenous faculty hires. Additionally, two Indigenous faculty members were appointed to York Research Chairs (YRCs) and one Indigenous-specific Canada Research Chair (CRC); established in 2021, in Indigenous History of North America. In the 2023-24 hiring cycle, two Indigenous-specific Tier Two CRC positions were created.

Research Chairs

Sean Hillier, assistant professor, Faculty of Health, was appointed YRC in July 2021. Hillier is a Mi'kmaw scholar whose research is in Indigenous Health Policy and One Health.

Lisa Myers, assistant professor in the Faculty of Environment, YRC in Indigenous Art and Curatorial Practice. Appointed in July 2021, Myers is Anishinaabe, from Shawanaga and Beausoleil First Nation. Her research focuses on contemporary Indigenous art, considering the varied values and functions of elements, such as medicine, plants and language, sound and knowledge.

Alan Corbiere is an assistant professor in the History Department, Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies. Anishinaabe from M'Chigeeng First Nation. Corbiere is a Tier 2 CRC, appointed in 2021, in Indigenous History of North America. His research interests include Indigenous Peoples, history, Anishinaabe language revitalization, treaty research and relationships.

The 2023-24 hiring cycle included the following commitments.

- Canada Research Chair (Tier 2) in Indigenous Health, History and Healing (assistant/associate professor), School of Nursing, Faculty of Health. (Date posted: Nov. 9, 2023. Application deadline: Jan. 15, 2024)
- Canada Research Chair (Tier 2) in Contemporary Indigenous Art (assistant/associate professor), Department of Visual Art & Art History, School of the Arts, Media, Performance & Design. (Date posted: Sept. 12, 2023. Application deadline: Nov. 15, 2023)

7) York must commit to recruiting and providing adequate funding and supports for Indigenous graduate and undergraduate students.

- Beginning in 2022, the Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS) has dedicated six Ontario Graduate Scholarships for Indigenous graduate students.
- The application fee for Indigenous applicants to graduate programs was removed, and discussions are under way to facilitate a process for Indigenous students applying to undergraduate programs.
- A full-time Traditional counsellor position was created, and the hire was completed in early 2023.
- Initial discussions were held with York Advancement, seeking changes to existing scholarship criteria to be more inclusive of Indigenous graduate students.
- Ministry funding for Indigenous Student Services remains unchanged. Associate Provost Students created a new manager role to support fundraising and grant development to secure additional funding. The manager, grants administration position, was created, and the hire is complete.

8) The University must respond to the contents of this document with an action plan and/or response to the points noted. Indigenous faculty and students have again given their time to tell the institution and its leadership their concerns and needs. Through the IC, the University must take time and effort to respond to them.

The action plan was created in 2019. Once appointed, the AVPII worked alongside the AVP Research & Innovation to follow through on the actions. Regular reports from the VP Research and the VP Equity, People and Culture were shared with the IC.

In December 2023, the work was considered complete. Next steps will be identified and articulated as part of this IFR process.

5.2 York University Indigenous Research Seed Fund

The York Indigenous Research Seed Grant Program was developed to provide financial support to Indigenous early career researchers. The program is specifically aimed at supporting foundational and pilot research leading to larger and/or continuing projects. The program is open to Indigenous tenure-stream faculty members, Indigenous PhD students and Indigenous postdoctoral fellows. Retired Indigenous faculty members who have been active in research (as demonstrated on their CVs) in the three years immediately preceding their application may also apply. The program prioritizes pre-tenure Indigenous faculty members. Projects focused on but not limited to policy, political, environmental, economic, social, cultural, health and legal areas that shape Indigenous experience are welcomed. These grants make room for Indigenous research and/or Indigenous forms of disseminating research findings. Primarily, the goal of this initiative is to support Indigenous scholars in establishing roots to grow their research careers. With input from Professors MacGregor, Dion and Hillier, VPRI completed the pilot round of Indigenous Research Seed Grants in 2022 and secured an additional three years of funding at \$250,000 per year.

2022 Report

- Eleven applications were received.
- Eleven research projects were funded.
- A total of \$204,298.49 was awarded.

2023 Report

- Seven applications were received.
- Six research projects were funded.
- A total of \$244,966.81 was awarded.

Total funds distributed thus far: \$449,265.30.

5.3 Indigenous Research Ethics Board

In recognition of distinct Indigenous knowledge, research involving Indigenous Peoples, and to ensure appropriate sensitivity to cultural and community rights, roles and responsibilities, the Policy on Indigenous Research Involving Human Participants and an autonomous research ethics review board have been established to govern the review of all research involving Indigenous Peoples.

In 2023, the IREB was launched at York University (<https://yfile.news.yorku.ca/2023/03/21/indigenous-research-ethics-board-sets-nationwide-precedent/>). It is the first autonomous IREB at a post-secondary institution in Canada. Established in service of decolonizing research, the IREB is guided by a commitment to ensuring researchers respect the safety, welfare, dignity and rights of participants in their research. Foregrounding the voices and needs of Indigenous communities within Indigenous research, the IREB will be made up of a council that will include five York faculty members, one undergraduate and one graduate student – all representative of a diversity of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples and gender identities. It will also include three external Elders and/or Knowledge Keepers, as well as three non-University-affiliated Indigenous community representatives.

The Office of VPRI will provide the operational resources for the IREB, including an annual 0.5 FCE (three-credit) course release for the IREB Chair, honorariums for Elders and Indigenous community members (up to three each) and research internships for student members (up to three students annually). The administrative, operational and policy support will continue to be provided by the Office of Research Ethics in the Division of VPRI.



Through both financial and in-kind support from the Office of Research Ethics and the Associate Vice-President research, the IREB shall have the requisite financial and administrative support to ensure that it has both the autonomy and resources to fulfill its responsibilities. While many institutions have developed policies governing research involving Indigenous Peoples, including York, the development of a wholly autonomous institutional IREB is a significant move toward decolonizing research.

5.4 Centre for Indigenous Knowledges and Languages

The launch of the CIKL was a significant accomplishment. This Organized Research Unit (ORU) is responsible for advancing Indigenous-focused research, providing much-needed support to an emerging group of Indigenous scholars and providing a gathering space on campus. Included here are the year one and year two CIKL annual reports.

2022 Annual Report: In CIKL's first year as a newly formed ORU, energy was focused on laying the groundwork for a successful and thriving centre. *CIKL* has established a leadership team and membership structure, with 30 active members, mostly Indigenous faculty at York. They have actively supported research initiatives by awarding \$204,298 in seed grant funding to 10 Indigenous faculty, postdoctoral and graduate student researchers. The creation of a two-year postdoctoral fellowship specifically for CIKL, under the Provost's Postdoctoral Fellowships for Black and Indigenous Scholars program, has further strengthened the centre's impact on Indigenous research at the University. Furthermore, CIKL has organized and co-sponsored several successful events, including workshops, research lectures and a seminar series, in collaboration with other organizations and initiatives, bringing attention to important issues such as climate change, Indigenous languages, environmental justice and treaty relations. Their efforts to develop partnerships with other ORUs, faculties and associations on campus, as well as their collaboration with Indigenous student groups and offices, have expanded their reach and created a network of support for Indigenous research at York. CIKL's achievements demonstrate their commitment to fostering a thriving Indigenous research community and promoting Indigenous knowledge and scholarship.

2023 Annual Report: CIKL has continued to have a significant impact on the Indigenous research community at York. They have seen substantial growth in their membership, with over 50 active faculty researchers, postdoctoral fellows, graduate and undergraduate students and community members, indicating an increasing interest and engagement in Indigenous research. Collaborating with the Harriet Tubman Institute (HTI) to address safety issues on the third floor of York Lanes signifies CIKL's commitment to creating a safe and central gathering place for Black and Indigenous scholars, students and community. During Congress 2023, it was a gathering place for visiting scholars.

Working alongside other Indigenous departments and centres across campus, CIKL has contributed to institutional priorities, such as providing guidance on Indigenous seed grants and postdoctoral fellowships and participating in discussions on the Indigenous People's Belonging Verification Policy at York. Their active involvement in the 2023 Pow Wow and hosting 32 events throughout the year, including workshops, lectures, seminars and socials, demonstrate their commitment to knowledge sharing and community engagement. The inclusion of their first visiting scholar, Ted Jojola, further enriches the intellectual exchange and expertise within the CIKL community.

5.5 Indigenous Faculty and Tri-council Funding

Indigenous Faculty Researchers								
Researcher	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Researcher 1	N/A*		1					1
Researcher 2		1	1		2			4
Researcher 3	1		2	1				4
Researcher 4			1	1				2
Researcher 5	N/A	N/A		1				1
Researcher 6	N/A	N/A	N/A			1		1
Researcher 7		2	1					3
Researcher 8	N/A				1			1
Researcher 9			1	4		1		6
Researcher 10		3	6	6	4	3		22
Researcher 11	N/A	N/A	N/A			2		2
Researcher 12		1	1		1			3
Researcher 13			1	1				2
Submission total	1	6	12	12	8	6		52
Successful submissions								37

Table 5.5A

*Not yet hired at York

Indigenous researchers at York have a 71 per cent success rate in their applications for tri-council funding. Since 2017, a total of 29 Indigenous faculty members have been eligible to submit applications for tri-council funding, and 13 of the 29 (45 per cent) submitted proposals. By way of comparison, keeping in mind that this is comparing all proposals submitted to tri-council against the 2023 SSHRC IG competition, it is not an exact comparison yet still useful. In the recently released SSHRC Insight Grant results for the fall 2023 competition, York received 21 awards out of 66 eligible applications, for total funding of \$2,882,747 and a success rate of 31.8 per cent. The national success rate is 34.1 per cent. The success rate is important and suggests that investing time and resources in Indigenous faculty members in developing their research agendas is beneficial to research, Indigenous knowledge and the University.

5.6 Summary and Key Considerations Informing Phase Two

Actions taken in response to Principle Five include recognizing and supporting Indigenous faculty, hiring of an Indigenous research officer, a public statement supporting Indigenous ways of knowing, reconciling Indigenous research with York's accountability needs, engaging with Indigenous communities and hiring more Indigenous faculty members. Additionally, the University has made a commitment to recruiting and providing adequate funding and support for Indigenous graduate and undergraduate students, including scholarships and staff positions, and creating a supportive environment for Indigenous scholars. It created the Indigenous Seed Grants Program to provide financial support for Indigenous early-career researchers and projects focused on shaping Indigenous experiences in various areas. It established the Indigenous Research Ethics Board, to ensure appropriate cultural sensitivity in research involving Indigenous communities, with a structure that includes diverse Indigenous representation. Finally, it launched CIKL, where achievements include supporting research initiatives, providing funding, hosting events, collaborating with other organizations and fostering a thriving Indigenous research community at York University.



CHAPTER SIX

Indigenous Framework Principle Six: Engage with Indigenous Communities to Enrich the Learning Process

A survey of actions and events happening across the University shows that there are exemplary cases of engagement with Indigenous communities. Deep relationships, cultivated over time, rooted in shared commitments, have resulted in research partnerships, teaching and learning opportunities and arts and culture collaborations. This comprehensive but not exhaustive list of University-Indigenous community engagements illustrate ongoing support for people and projects that provide opportunities for collaborative work that contributes to York's success in this area.

6.1 Indigenous Law Camp

Since September 2014, in collaboration with the Chippewas of Nawash, Osgoode has hosted an annual Anishinaabe Law Camp at Neyaashiinigiing (Cape Croker, on Georgian Bay), as an introduction to Anishinaabe legal concepts, principles, pedagogies and reasoning. The camp is guided by community Knowledge Keepers, law scholars, Elders and ecologists, for 35 to 40 students and six to eight faculty members. Participants begin to learn how to read the fundamental text that the Anishinaabe have historically drawn upon to build their intellectual tradition: the land itself. They listen to stories of the Chippewas and discuss the principles they contain for living respectfully and resolving conflicts. Aspects of current conflicts and dilemmas experienced by the community are also explained and reflected on during the camp. Another major experiential education program is a four-day Indigenous Law Camp that was established in 2018 in collaboration with the Rama First Nation and led by Professor Jeffery Hewitt. About 40 students go to the Rama First Nation Law Camp for an intensive learning experience.

6.2 Biskaabiiyaang

York University's Academic Innovation Fund (AIF) has provided financial support to Biskaabiiyaang: The Indigenous Metaverse. Biskaabiiyaang aims to create a virtual world that delivers Anishinaabe language and cultural competency programs through immersive quests, activities and learning games. The project seeks to increase the number of Anishinaabemowin second-language speakers and serve as a living archive of Indigenous heritage. Professor Maya Chacaby, an assistant professor at Glendon, developed the massive multi-player online role-playing game (MMORPG), which allows students to immerse themselves in a post-apocalyptic landscape, learning Anishinaabe language, culture and values. By incorporating traditional stories and real-time interactions with Elders, the game serves as an engaging platform for language education and community building. Since the project's conception in 2021, Chacaby has worked with project partners York University, the Nokiiwin Tribal Council and UniVirtual (formerly known as CNDG). Contributors include Anishinaabe Elders, the Indigenous Youth Council and Chacaby's students.

6.3 Indigenous Student Exchange Program

Early in 2021, York launched an international Indigenous student exchange program, adapting to virtual delivery in response to pandemic restrictions. The program, led by York International in collaboration with various University departments, aims to provide Indigenous students with global exchange opportunities, fostering connections within the Indigenous community worldwide. Funded by the federal Outbound Student Mobility Pilot Program, the initiative involves 10 Indigenous York students engaging in online workshops with peers from partner institutions across the globe. Themes include Global Indigeneity, Knowledge Keeping, Spirituality, Political Movements and more, culminating in collaborative projects exploring these topics. The program incorporates spiritual grounding and support services to address any emotional challenges that may arise during discussions. Participants can earn a certificate of completion, with York students having the option to receive course credits by registering for an extended course duration. The program aims to celebrate Indigenous brilliance and promote globally connected learning opportunities.

6.4 Projects Funded by the Indigenous Teaching and Learning Fund

The Indigenous Teaching and Learning Fund (ITLF), established by the VP Academic in 2020, supports projects that incorporate Indigenous knowledges and perspectives in academic programming and curricular offerings for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. The vision of the fund is to support a more inclusive campus environment and explore and establish new ways of supporting Indigenous faculty, undergraduate and graduate students while fostering a diversity of Indigenous knowledges and scholarship. A call for proposals is sent out each August, and decisions are made at the end of September. Priority is given to projects that strengthen the relationship between York University and Indigenous communities.



	Project Name	Project Leads	Description
2020-2021 Indigenous Teaching and Learning Funded Projects			
1	Medicines, Art & Storytelling: Indigenous Land & Place-based Education at Black Creek Farm	J Vorstermans, School of Health Policy & Management	Co-design with Sweet Roots Grass Collective a module on health, rights and Indigenous ways of knowing, plants, medicines & land that will include a land-based experiential learning opportunity.
2	Inclusion of Indigenous Astronomy Content	J Rogerson, Science, Technology, & Society	Incorporate Indigenous astronomical knowledge & perspectives into courses.
2021-2022 Indigenous Teaching and Learning Funded Projects			
3	Exploring the Interplay between Indigenous Art & Mathematics	P. Sargent and A. Chow (Collaboration with U of Waterloo), Faculty of Science	Three workshops featuring local Indigenous artists who use mathematics in their artistic works. Participants will make concrete connections between mathematics, Indigenous knowledge & culture.
4	Improving supports for Indigenous Science Students	P. Wilson, Department of Biology, Faculty of Science & Head of Bethune College	Exploration/establishing ways of supporting Indigenous undergraduate students contributing to a more inclusive campus environment that values the plurality of Indigenous knowledge and scholarship.
5	Indigenous knowledge and perspectives in project-based civil engineering courses	P. Mondal, Civil Engineering, Lassonde School of Engineering	To develop Indigenous knowledge – and values-based curriculum in civil engineering project-based courses, 'Civil Engineering Capstone Design Project' and 'Civil Engineering for a Sustainable Future'.
2022-2023 Indigenous Teaching and Learning Funded Projects			
6	HUMA 1207 Houdensosaunee Social Dance	J. Green, LA&PS	Hosting a Haudensosaunee dance & luncheon for students in the Indigenous People & Relationship to Land course.
7	Community Voices in PSE	Michael White, LA&PS	Host 3 guest speakers for students in Indigenous Spirituality in the Contemporary World course faculty from the department will attend.
8	Making Good Tracks Moccasin Project	K. Brant-Birioukov, Faculty of Education	Moccasin making and pow wow movement as central to honouring ancestral knowledge, pedagogy, & art in teacher education course.
9	Bridging Indigenous Women's & IndigiQueer Voices from Community to Indigenous Feminisms Class	A. Alook, LA&PS	5 guest lectures by Indigenous arts and activism practitioners /PHD Students. Inviting PHD Candidates at York that use Indigenous feminism and decolonial feminist approaches in their research and teaching.
10	Exploring Toronto as a City of Solidarity and Alienation	Soma Chatterjee, LA&PS	Funding to hire 2 grad students to support a digital photo exhibition of student projects from this course which explores immigrant and Indigenous histories in Toronto and potential for being in solidarity.

Table 6.4A

Table 6.4A provides a snapshot of selected projects funded by ITLF over three years. These projects provide opportunities for York faculty and students to work with Indigenous community members to enrich the learning process. Some, like the Medicines, Art and Storytelling Project, are aimed at bringing Indigenous knowledges and experiences into course experiences. Others, including the Indigenous Art and Mathematics Project and the Making Good Tracks Moccasin Project, are aimed at indigenizing and decolonizing curriculum and/or course content. Additional ITLF projects are described in chapters 8 and 9.

6.5 Summary and Key Considerations Informing Phase Two

Ongoing support for projects that benefit both the University and Indigenous communities is critical. These engagements serve to:

- Increase Indigenous presence within the University, thereby contributing to the well-being of Indigenous students, staff and faculty;
- raise up the legitimacy of Indigenous knowledges within the University community; and
- transform the reputation of post-secondary education within communities.

Cases of exemplary engagement exist at Osgoode, with the law camps at Chippewas of Nawash and Rama First Nations; the Biskaabiyaang project, which supports Anishinaabe language learning; and the Indigenous Student Exchange Program and the Lassonde K2i Academy. Additionally, many projects supported by the Indigeneity in Teaching and Learning Fund enrich learning and strengthen the relationship between York University and Indigenous communities.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Indigenous Framework Principle Seven: Establish Spaces for Indigenous Cultures and Community Within the University

This chapter describes existing physical as well as linguistic spaces and spaces within existing ceremonies, such as convocation, where Indigenous life and presence at York University can and do flourish. It also reports on community aspirations for a dedicated working, gathering and ceremonial space.

7.1 Established Indigenous Spaces at the Keele, Glendon and Markham Campuses

7.1A Centre for Indigenous Student Services

Established: 2001

Location: 246 York Lanes, 80 York Blvd., second floor

Description: The centre itself is small, with a lobby, a meeting room, offices and a kitchenette.

Function: Provide Indigenous students with academic, spiritual, cultural and physical supports. Students drop in, study, meet with a Traditional counsellor, access cultural programming and visit with staff and each other.

7.1B Centre for Indigenous Knowledges & Languages

Established: 2021

Location: 347 York Lanes, 80 York Blvd., third floor

Description: The centre includes three offices, a boardroom (maximum 30 people), lounge space, a shared kitchen and meeting spaces.

Function: CIKL is a research centre that supports Indigenous and decolonizing scholarship. It works to facilitate knowledge that re-centres Indigenous knowledges, languages, practices and ways of being.

7.1C Skennen'kó:wa Gamig

Established: 2017

Location: 35 Nelson Rd.

Description: Skennen'kó:wa Gamig, which means “the House of Great Peace” is a two-storey cabin built in the 1820s. It has a main space for gathering (maximum 29 people), a full kitchen, a sunroom and outdoor space. The cabin has a second floor that is not in use because it is not accessible, lacking a wheelchair lift or elevator access.

Function: A dedicated cultural space on the Keele campus that hosts programming and is available for various events, ceremonies, gatherings, teachings, gardening and community. It is an informal centre for Indigenous community life at York where community members can feel they are not within the city.

7.1D Tipi

Established: May 2019

Location: Adjacent to Skennen'kó:wa Gamig, in the southwest quadrant of campus, behind Osgoode Hall Law School.

Description: The tipi is a large space with a firepit in the centre.

Function: The tipi is strictly used for traditional, spiritual and educational purposes.

7.1E Indigenous Students Association of York Office

Established: Pre-2002

Location: Student Centre, Room 431, 4700 Keele St. **Description:** The ISAY office is on the fourth floor of the Student Centre, within York Lanes.

Function: ISAY is a community service group sponsored by the York Federation of Students (YFS). The group represents the voice of Indigenous student advocacy and ally building, providing a safe space for students to seek supports from their peers and get direction on where to seek further supports. The group also hosts and co-hosts various events, such as round dances, art activities, cooking clubs, feasts, socials and more. For over 20 years ISAY was integral in leading the annual All Nations Pow Wow at the University.

7.1F Osgoode Indigenous Student Association (OISA) Office

Established: 1985

Location: Ignat Kaneff Building, Room 0014D, 4700 Keele St.

Description: OISA seeks to develop community relations within the Osgoode student body and with Indigenous communities, and to advocate for cultural competence in the next generation of legal professionals.

Function: OISA provides a social and support network for Indigenous students while also organizing socials, events, lectures, community feasts, lunch-and-learns and more and raising awareness about Indigenous legal issues within the law school.

7.2 Space and Indigenous Presence

7.2A Ahqahizu, 2016

Location: In front of York Lions Stadium, this 26-tonne granite sculpture was created by Inuit carvers Ruben Komangapik and Koomuatuk (Kuzy) Curley with a team of assistants and apprentices, including visual art students in the School of the Arts, Media, Performance & Design (AMPD) and members of the neighbourhood



community. The sculpture portrays a young Inuk soccer player who is assuming an Alaskan high-kick position, and it serves as an important indicator of Inuit presence on York's Keele Campus.

7.2B Photo Exhibit: *Joyful Presence*

Photos in the *Joyful Presence* exhibit reflect the vibrant communities of Indigenous students, staff and faculty at York. Participating in ceremony, cultural practice, teaching and learning in and through relationships with the land and each other, they assert a joyful presence. Curated by Marissa Magneson (PhD candidate, Education) and Susan Dion (AVPII) for Congress 2023, the exhibit located on the second floor of the Scott Library is semi-permanent and features 38 photographs.

7.2C Convocation Ceremony

Since the fall of 2020, a convocation ceremony committee has been working to create space for Indigenous presence in all York University convocation ceremonies. It aims to ensure that Indigenous graduates are able to wear regalia, and that a representative from CISS is a part of the platform party. Discussions are under way to include cedar trees on the platform. Arrangements will be made for the inclusion of an honour song during ceremonies that include graduates from Indigenous-specific programs and at each ceremony when an Indigenous student is receiving a PhD.

7.3 Space and Indigenous Community Aspirations

Discussions about the need and desire for space and presence on York University campuses take place frequently. During the November 2022 IC meeting, members posed specific questions, including the following:

- 1) Do we want to ask for Indigenous Council's input on all new builds?
- 2) Do we want to request that Indigenous presence be acknowledged in every new building?
- 3) What do people want to do in an Indigenous-specific gathering space?

Indigenous community members are aware of an urgent need for a dedicated physical space for the community. Despite the community growing, there is a sense of fragmentation, loneliness and difficulty in finding each other and in finding a place to have conversations. For community members to feel at home, they need a space where people can gather, support each other, build a shared sense of community and feel safe. Further, there is a need for a dedicated, recognizable space for cultural practices, where community members can engage with and preserve their cultural knowledge on campus.

The Indigenous community is expanding, but York does not have enough space and infrastructure for it to continue to grow. To contribute to the growth and development of the Indigenous community, York needs more dedicated spaces for the community and areas that reflect Indigenous presence on campus. Dedicated Indigenous spaces are also crucial for keeping current Indigenous faculty members at York. Dedicated spaces for Indigenous students make it easier for them to feel welcome, stay in the program and consider returning to York for other degrees. The institution urgently needs to deal with current space constraints and its long-term needs and priorities.

During this discussion, questions centred not only on the physical space and building but also on land utilization. The land use planning committee divided the campus into four large quadrants, and the IC has concerns about how land is being considered.

7.3A Additional Space for CIKL

CIKL requires more space for incoming post-docs and students and a space for gathering and interacting with faculty. CIKL is outgrowing its current space. In its initial application, CIKL expressed interest in the Hoover House and lands around it for a larger medicine garden.

7.3B Additional Space for CISS

Having a strong sense of community is an integral part of students' education and an important aspect in their day-to-day life. CISS is outgrowing its present location at York Lanes. The University needs a bigger dedicated space for Indigenous students. Students have reported being confused about locating physical spaces where they can find other members of the Indigenous community. There are three separate locations, which makes it frustrating for students who want to interact more with faculty and each other.

Indigenous students are planning to submit a proposal for a new building for Indigenous members of York University, including CISS and all Indigenous departments. Indigenous students are thinking of future students and what they would benefit from; in their proposal for a new building, they also mention emergency housing.

7.3C Community Gathering and Ceremony Space

It is important to have a dedicated space where Indigenous people can gather as a community, engage with each other and feel that moment of recognition. Being together is how we work. The Indigenous community needs a place that can accommodate student spaces and lounges, offices and meeting rooms, research facilities, departmental areas, cultural practice, faculty and staff. Having everyone together will foster a sense of community and identity. As a community, we are ready to make the request and proposal and to design and articulate our vision.

Indigenous community members share that they feel seen with the Indigenous language on signage and ask about the ways of putting those markers on campus to make people feel seen and safer, affirm their presence and feel that their identity and the land itself are reflected to them.

Some suggest putting Indigenous presence around campus even more, as having a ceremony and gathering to change signage could be very positive.

Most faculties, including Education, Osgoode and Schulich, do have student and faculty spaces, but the Indigenous community is spread out across campus. A sense of community is lacking and difficult to develop, given the lack of opportunity to interact. While the Indigenous faculty at Osgoode Hall Law School say they appreciate being together in their space at Osgoode, they believe it would be valuable to connect with the broader Indigenous community. Students at Osgoode expressed their need for a better and bigger community space, as their current basement meeting room can only fit three people.

7.3D Space for Medicine Gardens

Many Indigenous members of the York community emphasize the importance of land-based space for the community and the desire for multiple gardens across the campus. Gardens would provide a vitally important space for the Indigenous community to practice, share and strengthen their Indigenous knowledges and improve health and well-being.

7.3E Consideration of Hoover House

Some Indigenous faculty members have argued in favour of creating an Indigenous space at Hoover House. Located on the southwest side of campus, near Stong Pond, the site has adjacent space suitable for a medicine garden. The proposed renovations for Hoover House would cost an estimated \$1 million, with plans to accommodate only nine offices and a boardroom. While it would provide some additional postdoctoral spaces, it would only fill some of the research needs, and the community remains unconvinced about it being a good long-term solution. There are concerns regarding the lack of substantial space for growth at the site. Some consider the isolated location a benefit, as it would provide the community with privacy; while others, particularly students, feel that the space is so far from the centre of campus it would make getting there a challenge.



7.4 Indigenous Spaces in Ontario Universities

Other universities across the province are opening Indigenous buildings that serve as comprehensive hubs for faculty, research, teaching, gathering, cultural practice and student spaces. Examples include the University of Toronto, Western University, Laurentian University and Wilfrid Laurier University, all of which have dedicated buildings for Indigenous community. Members of IC mentioned McMaster University's Indigenous space as an exemplary model that York can draw inspiration from.

At McMaster, the Indigenous space is expanding into a department with intentional design elements, featuring spacious rooms flooded with natural light. It includes a student library with a vast collection of titles in the areas of Indigenous knowledge, research and language, along with a student lounge for studying, meetings and breaks. Moreover, the space incorporates a closed medicine garden cultivated with plants sourced from Six Nations of the Grand River. There is a vegetable garden and an outdoor classroom and community gathering space with a firepit, benches and tables. McMaster also included a ceremonial space that is accessible, open, warm and welcoming, which serves as a venue for Indigenous courses, meetings and cultural events. There is a dedicated room for Elders in residence, facilitating their presence within the community.

7.5 Summary and Key Considerations Informing Phase Two

This chapter outlines existing physical spaces within York University that support Indigenous life, and it highlights the community's aspirations for a dedicated working, gathering and ceremonial space within the University.

Indigenous community members have expressed aspirations for additional space for CIKL, CISS, community gatherings, ceremonies and medicine gardens. The community explored the potential utilization of Hoover House for Indigenous spaces and gardens, emphasizing the urgent need for dedicated physical space, emergency and Indigenous housing all together, the necessity to address fragmentation in current spaces, and advocacy for increased community involvement in decision-making processes, including land use.

Highlighting the importance of dedicated Indigenous spaces for fostering community growth, retaining faculty, promoting student well-being and preserving cultural practices, the community draws inspiration from the comprehensive Indigenous hub at McMaster University and similar spaces at other post-secondary institutions across the province.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Indigenous Framework Principle Eight: Ensure that the Perceptions and Experiences of Indigenous Community Members Are Reflected in the Classroom, on Campus and in University Life

Gathering evidence to document the ways in which the perceptions and experiences of Indigenous community members are reflected in classrooms, on campus and in university life required a broad survey of actions, events and initiatives. This chapter focuses on University-wide initiatives and projects originating at the faculty and departmental level. It is difficult to capture the full range of actions taking place across campus. YFile, York's journal of record and the campus newsletter were important sources of information. Projects supported through the ITLF, events led by the Indigenous Initiatives Department as well as information about events and initiatives gathered through personal communication with members of the Indigenous communities inform this chapter.

While some of the actions described here – for example the York University land acknowledgement drafted in early 2017 and read aloud for the first time in September 2017, and the Anishinaabemowin version of the national anthem at convocation ceremonies, introduced in 2020 during virtual ceremonies – are considered symbolic or performative rather than change that has a positive material impact on Indigenous people. Yet these changes are not insignificant. Transformative change requires a shift in the consciousness of people, actions like the land acknowledgement contribute to creating conditions that have the potential to support deeper change. Additionally, it is important to acknowledge the significance of these actions for Indigenous people at York; the recognition of Indigenous presence can make the institution a little less alienating.

In many ways, responding to this principle requires the efforts of Indigenous faculty, students and staff. Some non-Indigenous allies are active participants in reaching out to Indigenous community partners to support this. Still, for the most part, it requires work on the part of Indigenous people. Keeping in mind the small number of Indigenous staff, faculty and students, accomplishing this principle adds to the workload of Indigenous people. It is also important to remember the context in which this work occurs. The University is a colonial institution, and shifting the institution even a little is daunting, exhausting and, at times, even debilitating. Recognizing this is crucial in understanding the full scope of the challenges faced by Indigenous community members at York.

8.1 Pan-University Education Initiatives

These initiatives led by Indigenous members of the York community provided opportunities for members of the broader non-Indigenous university community to engage in learning from Indigenous people's experiences and perspectives.

Indigenous Cultural Competency and Trauma-Informed Training

June of 2022 saw the launch of the Indigenous Cultural Competency and Culture-based Trauma-Informed Practices Certificate Program. This course is run through Glendon Continuing Education. To date, five sessions have taken place, and 500 people overall have received their certificates. At least 50 per cent of participants are Indigenous.

Through experiential learning and self-exploration, the course seeks to build cultural competencies, understanding of trauma's impacts through Anishinaabe Traditional Teachings and tools for trauma-informed practices. The course covers various topics over six weeks, including Trickster Stories, Cultural Competencies, Indigenous perspectives on healing, trauma teachings, implementing trauma-informed practices and building relationships based on trust, friendship and mutual respect.

Learning from and with Indigenous Community Members Book Club

In March 2022, the AVPII Department initiated an Indigenous book club, a space where non-Indigenous and Indigenous people can come together to learn through conversations with Indigenous guest speakers. They discuss Indigenous literature and topics that are meaningful to them, their nations and their communities. The intention is to foster understanding and create a foundation for reciprocal relationships and partnerships between non-Indigenous and Indigenous people. Since its inception, the Indigenous book club has held a total of seven sessions across the fall and winter terms. Here is a summary of the sessions:

- March 2022: Autumn Epple and Sheila Wheesk discussed *A Mind Spread Out on the Ground*.
- June 2022: Marianne and Georgie Groat explored *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants*.
- January 2023: Marissa Magnuson and Lisa Shales delved into *Hunting by Stars*.
- February 2023: Tanya Senk and Bonnie Johnston shared insights from *Indigenous Toronto: Stories That Carry This Place*.
- March 2023: Nicole Muir and Sabrina Cicansky presented on *Monkey Beach*.
- April 2023: Dayna Towers and Jamie McIntyre discussed *The Theory of Crows*.
- May 2023: Dean Smith and Missy Knott explored *Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg: This Is Our Territory*.

Smudging Program at CIKL

Launched in October 2023, this new smudging program occurs weekly at CIKL. Hosted by a work-study student/special projects assistant, it is designed to be accessible to all and support both Indigenous and non-Indigenous members of the York community. The program helps community members start the week in a good way, providing a safe place to pray, feel connected and/or gain knowledge about Indigenous practices and the four sacred medicines.

Decolonizing the Academy

In the fall of 2022, the AVPII, Professor Susan Dion, introduced a professional development course through the Teaching Commons called Decolonizing the Academy. This four-module course was offered virtually for the York community, and it began from the position that decolonizing the academy is both necessary and a shared responsibility. It provided opportunities for participants to engage with a curated collection of resources that examine what it means to decolonize, implications for teaching, learning and research, and Indigenous perspectives on what is at stake.

Learning Spirit Alliance

In 2023, a group of students from the Faculty of Health came together to address food insecurity within the campus community. Their initiative aims to educate students about food sovereignty, combat poverty and promote access to healthy and traditional foods. The alliance, led by current York students Leo Manning and Rainingbird Daniels, as well as former student Shanice Perrot, organizes workshops teaching participants how

to prepare traditional Indigenous dishes and shares knowledge about affordable, nutritious meals. Positive feedback highlighted the impact of the program in fostering cultural connection and providing essential skills for cooking on a budget. Through funding from Indigenous Youth Roots, the alliance has held events such as the Food Is Medicine workshops and free lunch gatherings to support those in need. As they seek additional funding for the future, the group remains dedicated to empowering Indigenous students with the tools they need to cook nourishing meals. Their commitment to community, cultural engagement and food sovereignty drives their efforts to make a lasting difference on campus.

Indigenous Storytelling Workshop

In the fall of 2017, a three-day Indigenous storytelling workshop funded through a grant from the Office of the Vice-Provost Academic focused on the Indigenization of Curriculum and featured Aboriginal Elders Muriel Miguel, Penny Couchie and Imelda Villalon. Nineteen students learned Miguel's "story-weaving" technique, which combines movement analysis with an Indigenous approach to storytelling and performance. Participants were encouraged to abandon rigid story structures and focus on how the story felt and how it should be shared, integrating improvisation and connecting shared narratives.

International Indigenous Student Exchange Knowledge Fair

In April 2021, York and its partners organized the International Indigenous Student Exchange Knowledge Fair. The event stemmed from the University's International Indigenous Student Exchange Program, which fostered dialogue and collaboration among Indigenous students at York and their counterparts in Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico and the Philippines, supported by Canada's Outbound Student Mobility Program Innovation Fund. The knowledge fair aimed to showcase student projects and insights gained from the program, allowing participants to engage with the broader community. The event offered live interpretation in English, French and Spanish.

Aandse: Anishinaabe Ways of Knowing and the Transformation of University-Based Knowledge Creation and Transfer

From 2017 to 2020, a collaborative project led by Liberal Arts & Professional Studies Professor Carolyn Podruchny, in partnership with M'Chigeeng First Nation Elder Lewis Debassige, took place. The project, developed based on an idea from Elder Debassige, aimed to foster a reciprocal relationship of sharing and learning. It achieved this by bringing University members into Anishinaabe spaces and Anishinaabe people into University spaces. The project was a blend of lectures, tours, hands-on learning and storytelling in specific places for specific knowledges, which included bannock making, ceramic work, beading and quill workshops and developing personal Anishinaabemowin vocabulary lists for participants.

Land-Based Learning at Black Creek Community Farm

An experiential learning opportunity for two classes in the Faculty of Health, School of Health Policy & Management (SHPM), was delivered in partnership with Sweet Grass Roots Collective at Black Creek Community Farm. Approximately 30 students from two classes met on the farm and received teachings about earthwork, arts, storytelling, and stewarding a Three Sisters medicine garden at the farm. This opportunity gave students a chance to be present on the land while learning from and with the land, with the goal that they would come away with a deeper knowledge of how health and health care exist based on different social locations and how colonization has shaped access to health and health care.

Business Excellence Academy: Student-Developed Initiative for Indigenous and Black High School Students

Four Schulich undergraduate students developed this business education and mentorship program, which supports Indigenous and Black high school students in Ontario. Launched in the summer of 2021 and currently ongoing, this program is designed for students to discover opportunities in the business world and explore topics related to marketing, finance and entrepreneurship under the mentorship of Schulich students. The one-month course consists of two-hour classes, four times a week, with a combination of guest speakers and interactive activities, then it gives students the opportunity to exercise the skills they have developed. Students receive a certificate of completion afterwards.

Elders On-Campus Program

Elders and Traditional counsellors share Indigenous knowledge, teachings and wisdom. This program offers students the chance to learn about ceremony and Indigenous pedagogies, providing an opportunity to enhance their spiritual growth and identity. Sessions include sharing circles and one-on-one counselling. The program provides CISS members with individual counselling sessions, where Elders knowledgeable about their respective nations' spiritual customs offer their support and care. The Elders also offer Traditional teaching workshops to encourage the knowledge of sacred medicines, items and practices. These workshops are designed to enlighten and enrich students' understanding of Indigenous traditions.



8.2 University-Wide Lectures

Faculty of Education Summer Institute Explores Relationships to Canada 150

In August 2017, the Faculty of Education Summer Institute at York explored the theme Relationships to Canada 150: Paradoxes, Contradictions and Questions during a two-day conference. The event aimed to bring together educators, parents, community members and teacher candidates for critical discussions on the achievement and well-being of youth. Keynote speaker Mahlikah Awe:ri Enml'ga't Saqama'sgw guided conversations around the purpose, impact, quality of education and social outcomes within the context of Canada 150. The conference offered workshops focusing on Indigenous relationships, historical injustices and systemic barriers faced by diverse communities in Canada. Attendees engaged in deep learning, unlearning and relearning to foster individual and collective action in education.

Indigenous Data Ownership Webinar

In October 2020, York University Teaching and Learning Librarian Stacy Allison-Cassin participated in a webinar panel that presented on Indigenous data ownership. The webinar, hosted by Research Data Canada, focused on Indigenous data ownership in the context of First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities in Canada. Speakers from various backgrounds shared insights on data ownership within their communities, highlighted their various challenges and explored available solutions and strategies. In addition to Allison-Cassin, the panellists included Joel Heath from the Arctic Eider Society and Lisa Brinkley from Dalhousie University, who shared a common goal: to enhance data sovereignty in Indigenous communities.

Canadian Writers in Person Lecture Series: Michelle Good, Indigenous Writer, Speaks About Residential School Trauma

On Sept. 21, 2021, Cree writer and lawyer Michelle Good joined the Canadian Writers in Person event series at York to speak on her novel *Five Little Indians*. This series is a for-credit course for York students, although it is open to York community members and the public who are not enrolled in the course. The course is offered out of the Department of Humanities in the Culture and Expressions program.

Canadian Writers in Person Lecture Series: Katłjà (Catherine) Lafferty

On Dec. 7, 2021, Katłjà (Catherine) Lafferty performed a reading from their debut novel, *Land-Water-Sky/Ndè-Ti-Yat'a*. The novel, set in Northern Canada, imagines what the world would be like if Indigenous legends walked among us. Lafferty, a Dene woman from the Northwest Territories, is an activist, poet and columnist who previously served as a councillor for her First Nation; she also writes about Indigenous injustices. This reading was open to all York community members and the public and was part of a for-credit course for York students.

Indigenous Perspectives on Planetary Healing

On Aug. 3, 2022, to celebrate the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, CIKL and the Dahdaleh Institute for Global Health Research hosted a discussion on planetary healing, celebrating Indigenous knowledges and space for sharing perspectives on striving toward human and environmental well-being. The discussion focused on healing as it relates to environmental injustice, climate change and biodiversity loss, with the goal of inspiring creativity, reciprocity and knowledge sharing among Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers and practitioners (people working on the ground).

Indigenous Archives Gathering 2022

A York-led symposium on Oct. 17 and 18, 2022, explored the access, engagement and activation of archives from various First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities and regions. In collaboration with the imagineNATIVE Film Festival, the symposium aimed to foster conversations, enable the sharing of knowledge, recognize various community needs and understand best practices around the current state of Indigenous media art archives in Canada. The symposium allowed Indigenous people to gather, continue cultural practices and collaborate while learning from panellists, keynotes and workshops.

8.3 National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (Orange Shirt Day)

The first Orange Shirt Day was held in 2020, it was observed to honour Indigenous children and families who suffered due to Canada's residential school system. York University encouraged reflection on the significance of Orange Shirt Day, emphasizing the theme Every Child Matters. York urged individuals to educate themselves about the residential school system and its consequences by referring to resources such as the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation and reports from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. On Sept. 30, community members were encouraged to participate in a moment of reflection at 11 a.m. to recognize the intergenerational trauma caused by residential schools to Indigenous Peoples in Canada. Wearing orange on this day became a symbol of support. The University encouraged active engagement in the reconciliation process and reiterated its commitment to fostering a more inclusive and equitable environment for all.

The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation 2021 panel at York University delved into the practical aspects of reconciliation, serving as the critical event for the University's day of activities dedicated to this cause. The virtual panel Reflections on Truth and Reconciliation saw over 700 attendees, including faculty, staff and students. The day culminated in a symbolic illumination, in orange light, of the Ross Building on the Keele Campus and the Glendon Manor on the Glendon Campus. The event was moderated by Carl James, director of the York Centre for Education and Community and Jean Augustine Chair; and it featured panellists, including President Rhonda L. Lenton and Vice-President EPC Sheila Cote-Meek, who emphasized the need for universities to acknowledge their role in colonial practices and push toward advancing Indigenous scholarship for reconciliation. Panellists including Susan Dion, Lisa Philipps, Sean Hillier, Mary Condon, Randy Pitawanakwat and Stephen Teong shared insights on the challenges and actions required for reconciliation. The holistic discussions from the panel underscored that reconciliation is a continuous journey that demands collaborative efforts and a commitment to learning and understanding Indigenous perspectives.

The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation 2022 was marked with a guest lecture by scholar Paulette Steeves, Indigenous archaeologist and Canada Research Chair in Healing and Reconciliation at Algoma University, and held in person in the Congregation Room at the Second Student Centre.

The second annual Truth and Reconciliation panel was a virtual event held on Sept. 30. The panel, which focused on hearing students' voices, addressed the theme Reflecting on the Legacies of Residential Schools: What It Means for Our Present and Our Futures. The panel, moderated by the AVPII, included three Indigenous PhD students, one Indigenous undergraduate student and one non-Indigenous student. They spoke to all Canadians' responsibilities in responding to reconciliation challenges.

The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation 2023 included multiple events: The AVPII Department, in collaboration with the Division of EPC, faculty and various division partners included the curation of seven film screenings for the York community in various locations at different times and days of the week. The screenings ran for 10 days, from Sept. 18 to Sept. 27. The Truth and Reconciliation Day panel was a hybrid event held on

Sept. 28. University staff panellists provided personal reflections on the year's theme of learning by engaging with various forms of media, and the event was very well attended, both in person and virtually. A ceremonial fire was lit and tended to throughout the day. Those who participated in person were offered tobacco ties to hold while listening to the speakers. They were then invited to visit Skennen'kó:wa Gamig to make a tobacco offering in the sacred fire with a firekeeper.

8.4 National Indigenous History Month and National Indigenous Peoples Day

National Indigenous History Month and National Indigenous Peoples Day 2021 was recognized at York with an event co-led by the Indigenous Alumni Network (YUIAN), in collaboration with CISS and the Office of Alumni Engagement. The event was a virtual panel discussion and Q&A on indigeneity, identity and student success, and it was open to the York community. Additionally, the Indigenous Students' Association collaborated with the York Federation of Students (YFS) and the Continuing Education Students Association of X University (CESAX) to organize a panel discussion. The panel was open to both the York community and the general public.

National Indigenous History Month and National Indigenous Peoples Day 2022 was celebrated with a community feast co-sponsored by CISS and the Department of Indigenous Initiatives; it was open to York community members and their families. The outdoor feast took place on June 16 at Skennen'kó:wa Gamig, with catering provided by Chef Charles Catchpole of CharGer Foods. To celebrate the conclusion of Indigenous History Month at York University, CIKL and the Department of Indigenous Initiatives organized Ambe Daga Wijiwishin: An Indigenous Walk on Campus, at York's Keele Campus. The name of the event in Anishinaabemowin means "come with me," reflecting the collaborative nature of the event, which drew upon Indigenous knowledge, poetry and art to highlight Indigenous spaces on campus. Indigenous voices led participants through selected stops during the campus walk, providing insights and context. The guided walk included visits to the following locations: Ahqahizu, a 26-tonne granite sculpture located at the front of York Lions Stadium, crafted using traditional sculpting techniques by Nunavut-based artists Ruben Komangapik and Koomuatuk Curley; the Centre for Indigenous Student Services; the HNES Native Species Garden; and Skennen'kó:wa Gamig

National Indigenous History Month and National Indigenous Peoples Day 2023 was celebrated with York alumna Bonnie Devine (MFA 1999) presenting her work titled *Writing Home* at the Helliwell Centre at Osgoode Hall Law School on June 12. Devine shared insights on beginning a conversation with the land, recounting her personal journey of walking, listening, looking and creating. Through her art, she invited viewers to join her on this journey, prompting reflection on attendees' own connections with the land and the significance of acknowledging Indigenous histories and perspectives.

8.5 Indigenous Teaching and Learning-Funded Projects

Chapter six reported on projects funded by ITLF that were more directly linked to courses and programs where students were earning credits toward a degree. The projects described here are aimed at providing opportunities for the broader University community to engage with and learn from the experiences and perspectives of Indigenous community members.

	Project Name	Project Leads	Description
2020-2021 Indigenous Teaching and Learning Funded Projects			
1	Indigenous Women's Speakers' Series on Decolonization	Elaine Coburn, Centre for Feminist Research & Sean Hillier, the Faculty of Health	Indigenous Women's Speakers' Series on Decolonization with 3 high profile speakers.
2	Decolonizing Theatre	Marlis Schweitzer, Professor and Chair, , Graduate Student Facilitator: Philip Geller, MFA candidate, Department of Theatre	Funding to bring members of Ad Hoc Assembly, a Toronto-based group of artists to participate in a roundtable conversation and give a workshop on decolonizing theatre practices, with a specific emphasis on Indigenous voices and perspectives.
3	Teaching Each Other Speaker Series Exploration and/or establishment of new ways of supporting Indigenous graduate students	Andrew McConnell, Student, Faculty of Education, on behalf of the M.Ed Urban Indigenous Education Cohort	Speaker Series: three graduates from previous cohorts and three Ph.D. Candidates to share their research experiences with the current students. This project is aimed at developing mentoring relationships between Indigenous researchers.
4	Regeneration: All our Relations Project	Joel Ong, Director, Sensorium: The Centre for Digital Art and Technology, AMPD	Indigenous workshop series highlight emerging relationships to the environment and to the realm of mythology, imaginary or spiritual led by indigenous scholars and artists that have been underrepresented through a Euro-centric artistic production and pedagogical model.
5	Polishing the Chain is a Knowledge Mobilization Project	M Stiegman, Al Corbière, Faculty of Environmental & Urban Change, and LA&PS History	Funding for video and sound editor honorariums for the production of five short videos featuring animated activity prompts exploring treaty related themes. These will be featured on the Treaty Guide website.
2021-2022 Indigenous Teaching and Learning Funded Projects			
6	Reciprocity And Transformative Justice As Foundational Ethos	J Vorstermans, Faculty of Health	To engage Indigenous educators to advise us on protocols and practices for RHDJ that center reciprocity and transformative justice and eliminate criminalizing and alienating policies and practices.
7	Discussions on Indigenizing the Science Curriculum	T. Kelly, Faculty of Science	A 1-day conference featuring 3 Indigenous speakers with expertise in science, Indigenizing the science curriculum in higher education.
2020-2021 Indigenous Teaching and Learning Funded Projects			
8	Decolonizing Global Health through Indigenous Knowledge	Kathleen Fallon, Faculty of Health	Build on the School of Global Health's ongoing work addressing decolonization and Indigenous knowledge through the building of our curriculum. Engagement with the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge & decolonization of global health.
9	Lunch and Learn: Connect, Educate, Enhance	S. Hartmann & H. Johnson, Osgoode Indigenous Student Ass.	2-3 events to promote and connect Indigenous students to traditional teachings and histories.

	Project Name	Project Leads	Description
10	“Gdakinomaadimin, Biindaakoonind Gokomisinaan”	R. Beaulne-Stuebig, Faculty of Education	GBG will fill the year with learning through land, culture, & language, it will involve 9 full moon sacred fire gatherings, 2 seasonal feasting ceremonies & 4 community teaching sessions.
11	Creating a SAGE Nest: Collaborative Mentorship & Support for Indigenous Graduate Students	Rebecca Beaulne-Stuebing, Faculty of Education	SAGE is a network of initiatives supporting Indigenous graduate student retention and success through peer-led support and organizing. Led by Indigenous graduate students and faculty involved with the M.Ed. cohort in Urban Indigenous Education.
12	Regeneration: All Our Relations Speaker and Performance	Laura Levin, Brenda Longfellow, Archer Pechawis, Emilia White, AMPD	Speaker series on how artmaking serves as a vital form of knowledge creation within Indigenous communities - a site for more just relations with the social and material environments.

Table 8.4A

The projects listed above are led/co-led by Indigenous faculty or Indigenous graduate students. This is positive, in that Indigenous people are accessing funding to support the integration of Indigenous knowledges, experiences and perspectives into university life. Often, it is Indigenous people who see the gaps and have the community connections and relationships to bring Indigenous people into the University as a means of responding to those gaps. At the same time, it makes visible the ways in which the majority of this work is being done by Indigenous people.

8.6 Summary and Key Considerations Informing Phase Two

Drawing on reports from various sources, including YFile, the Indigenous Initiatives Department and other departments, this chapter documents actions at York that reflect the perceptions and experiences of the Indigenous community in classrooms, on campus and in university life. It highlights a comprehensive range of University-wide initiatives that demonstrate a commitment to integrating Indigenous knowledges and perspectives into university life. Notably, the majority of projects were led or co-led by Indigenous faculty and/or students, underscoring their active role in advancing Indigenous representation and experiences within the University community. However, the limited number of Indigenous people at York compounds their workload, as they play a crucial role in driving these initiatives.

CHAPTER NINE

Indigenous Framework Principle Nine: Develop and Expand Educational Opportunities for Indigenous Communities

Relationships between Indigenous communities and institutions of formal schooling continue to be significantly impacted by the legacies of colonialism. Universities similar to other educational institutions are working toward cultivating trust. Initiatives developed in relationship with Indigenous communities, with an emphasis on responding to what communities want and need, are the focus of this chapter.

9.1 Indigenous Engineering & Innovation by Design Program

During the summer of 2022, a small group of students from W.C. Eaket Secondary School in Blind River, Ontario, participated in the Indigenous Engineering & Innovation by Design program, hosted by the Lassonde School of Engineering k2i academy. Co-developed by teacher Bryan Bellefeuille, the program focused on applying Indigenous knowledge and traditional engineering processes to address community challenges. Students earned an interdisciplinary credit while delving into traditional Indigenous technologies and engineering design. The immersive experience included land-based learning, hands-on projects, and workshops in engineering design, coding and electronics. The program continues as an interdisciplinary high school credit course in Indigenous Engineering, Technology and Innovation by Design. It aims to prepare students for post-secondary studies and promote Indigenous engineering and STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) education. This course continues to be offered at W.C. Eaket Secondary with 100 per cent of students enrolled in the course obtaining their credit and a course median of 95 per cent. There is interest in this course program from other schools and educators.

9.2 Schulich Executive Education

Under the direction of Executive Director Rami Mayer, Schulich ExecEd has partnered with Indigenous organizations to offer online, community-specific business education programming. Various certifications were developed in partnership with organizations, including the Bimose Tribal Council, the Ontario Native Women's Association (ONWA), the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres (OFIFC) and the Government of Nunavut, offering a range of programs from management skills to project management.

1) Bimose Tribal Council: Certificate in Management Skills for Supervisors

Program description: The Certificate in Management Skills for Supervisors program consists of eight modules, focused on outlining a supervisor's roles and responsibilities, motivation techniques, communications, effective delegation, and communication techniques to provide constructive, ethical feedback.

Launched: 2017

Number of participants and certificates issued: 20

Delivery: In person

2) Ontario Native Women’s Association: Mini-MBA for Indigenous Leaders

Program description: This 10-day program was designed as a technology-enhanced program, allowing for highly interactive classroom experiences supplemented with online materials and pre-session readings with which participants engage at their own pace. Participants gained knowledge and insights in a range of MBA subjects, including strategic management, marketing, finance and human resources.

Launched: 2021

Number of participants and certificates issued: 46

- a) Certificate in Management – one to 23 participants
- b) Certificate in Management – two to 20 participants
- c) Mini-MBA for Indigenous Leaders – 23 participants

3) Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres: Accelerated Management

Program description: This five-day online course, created with OFIFC’s management framework in mind, included five modules: managing performance, critical communication skills, solving complex problems, strategic mindset and talent champion.

Launched: 2020

Number of participants and certificates issued: 25

Delivery: Virtual



4) Wabaseemoong Child Welfare Authority (WCWA): Certificate in Management Fundamentals

Program description: The Management Fundamentals course was designed as a two-stream program for directors and managers. Managers participated in the following modules: key roles of supervisors and front-line managers, leadership and team motivation techniques, managing difficult situations, communications and staff development. Directors participated in the following modules: culture building and mindset leadership, transformational leadership and leading performance. Both groups also participated in group and one-on-one coaching post-session.

Launched: 2022

Number of participants and certificates issued: 30

Delivery: In person/virtual

5) Ontario Aboriginal Housing Shared Services: Certificate in Accelerated Management

Program description: Participants engaged in five modules: managing performance, critical communication skills, solving complex problems, strategic mindset and talent champion.

Launched: 2022

Number of participants and certificates issued: 25

Delivery: Virtual

6) Government of Nunavut: Master's Certificate in Project Management 2023-24

Program description: In fall of 2021, the Government of Nunavut partnered with Schulich Executive Education to offer the master's Certificate in Project Management. The program aims to empower the Nunavut workforce with specialized project management skills essential for tackling complex projects in various sectors. With more than 100 participants benefiting from the program, public servants are enhancing their capabilities, fostering a culture of innovation and planting the seeds for a new generation of professionals.

Launched: 2022

Number of participants and certificates issued: 35

Delivery: In-person and virtual

7) Niwiin Wendaanimok: Certificate in Program Management

Program Description: A 5-day accelerated Project Management program upskilled 25 technical project managers working in Indigenous communities to level-set and enhance their project management capabilities.

Launched: 2022

Number of participants and certificates issued: 20

Delivery: Virtual

9.3 Supporting Indigenous Communities Through ITLF Projects

ITLF has provided financial support to faculty, postdoctoral and graduate students working in collaboration with Indigenous community partners. These projects serve Indigenous people and communities, support relationships and, in some instances, begin to create pathways between the University and Indigenous communities.

	Project Name	Project Leads	Description
2020-2021 Indigenous Teaching and Learning Funded Projects			
1	Kwak'wala language documentation	Emily Elfner, Languages, Literatures & Linguistics	Kwak'wala language documentation
2	Navigating the Ph.D. Waters:	J. Hupfield & J Keeshig-Martin Ph.D. Candidates	Coaching Indigenous Ph.D. Candidates as they prepare proposals, comprehensive exams, and REB applications.
2021-2022 Indigenous Teaching and Learning Funded Projects			
3	Polishing the Chain: Treaty relations in Toronto	Martha Stiegman, Faculty of Environment and Urban Change	Polishing the Chain will explore the spirit & intent of Toronto treaties, the ways Indigenous peoples have & continue to uphold them, the extent to which they are reflected in contemporary Indigenous / state relations, & the possibilities these open for working towards establishing right relations with each other, and the Land.
4	Indigenous Local Economic Development	F Miele, LA&PS - School of Public Policy & Administration	To engage guest lecturers on various issues affecting Indigenous economic development & provide a more focused research-based analysis on Indigenous economic development approaches.
5	The Ties That Bind: The Ancestral Huron-Wendat Village at Black Creek, Toronto,	L. Anders Sandberg, Faculty of Environment and Urban Change	Funding for a 2-day conference to strengthen the relationship between York U and the Huron-Wendat Nation in Wendake, Quebec, whose ancestral village anchors the project and is located just south of the campus.
6	Repatriation of Haudenosaunee Knowledge through Mohawk Translation of Online Resources	Kiera Brant-Birioukov, Faculty of Education	Repatriate Haudenosaunee knowledge through Mohawk language translation in an online space, as part of the Earth to Tables Legacies project.
7	Simultaneous Indigenous Language Translation for Business Seminars	Ushnish Sengupta, Schulich School of Business	Funding for three seminars with Indigenous subject matter experts describing a business topic in English. Simultaneous Indigenous language translation and online delivery will make the content accessible to a broader audience. The purpose of the seminars is to generate interest in Business School from Indigenous students.
8	Dementia Care in the Indigenous Population	Don Davies, Faculty of Science/Biology	This project aims to increase knowledge of how the Indigenous population understand and experience dementia, and the impact of dementia on the Indigenous community.
9	Asemaa Circles Project	Rebecca Beaulne-Stuebing, Faculty of Education	The Asemaa Circles will be a series of teaching and planting workshops, supporting Indigenous and/or Black community members to grow their own Asemaa.

	Project Name	Project Leads	Description
2022-2023 Indigenous Teaching and Learning Funded Projects			
10	Documenting and Learning from the Work of Dr. Duke Redbird	Tanya Senk, PHD Candidate, Faculty of Education	This project aims to deepen Duke Redbird's relationship with York University, it will support further development of the website and support opportunities for teacher candidates at York University to learn from Redbird, establishing a person-to-person connection with him at the same time as getting an introduction to the website.
11	Reclaiming Aatisokaanan: Traditional Anishinaabe Stories	Maya Chacaby, Glendon Sociology	To begin to modernize the orthography documenting the Anishinaabe traditional stories collected by the Indigenous anthropologist, William Jones in 1906. Once complete it will be returned to the communities it came from. Students will work on the project by text scraping and cleaning, inputting into a program and formatting each story.

Summary and Key Considerations Informing Phase Two

Cultivating relationships between Indigenous communities and the University is an ongoing priority. This work takes time and a commitment of resources. It requires time to get to know what communities need and want, and creating programs that respond to what they need requires flexibility and building on existing relationships. It also involves recognizing the connections between the work done by faculty and students in relationship with their community partners and building on them.



CHAPTER TEN

Indigenous Framework Principle Ten: Ensure the Process for Developing, Implementing and Evaluating This Framework Involves Indigenous Community Members Both Within and Outside the University

Developing and Implementing

As illustrated throughout this report work in service of advancing the IF has for the most part been led by Indigenous students, faculty and staff, with support from non-Indigenous scholars, and student groups. Additionally, work in support of advancing the Framework Principles is taking place in divisions across the University. The section below provides a broad strokes outline of this work.

1) The President's Division

- a) Chief of Government and Community Relations & Protocol
 - Developed the Guidelines for Acknowledging Indigenous Peoples at University Events and Ceremonies in collaboration with the AVPII.
 - Consults bi-monthly with the AVPII to ensure Indigenous people and perspectives are included in university events and provides supporting relationships between York University and Indigenous Communities.
- b) Director, Community and Government Relations
 - In collaboration with the AVPII assists with organizing and hosting meetings with the President and Chiefs of Indigenous communities in close proximity to the University.
- c) Institutional Events
 - Assists with organizing of NDTR annual event.
 - Consults with AVPII on all University wide events to ensure Indigenous representation is included.
- d) Art Gallery of York University
 - Consults with AVPII.

2) The Provost's Division

- a) Vice-Provost Academic
 - In collaboration with the AVPII, administers the Indigenous Teaching and Learning Fund.
- b) Vice Provost Students
 - Office of the University Registrar leads a Committee to review content of interest to Indigenous applicants and students ensuring it is clear and respectful of Indigenous people's experiences and

perspectives. The committee is currently establishing procedures to remove application fees for Indigenous applicants.

- Student Success supports CISS.

c) Vice-Provost & Dean, Graduate Studies

- Removed fee for Indigenous Applicants to the Faculty of Graduate Studies.
- Creation of an Indigenous Queue ensures all files from Indigenous applicants are reviewed by an Indigenous faculty member or the AVPII.
- Administers the Indigenous Only OGS files ensuring that six Indigenous applicants to graduate school receive an Ontario Graduate Scholarship in collaboration with the AVPII.

d) Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning

- Teaching Commons, in collaboration with AVPII, offered a course on Decolonizing the Academy.
- Medicine Garden Project, VP Teaching and Learning to facilitate the creation of a medicine garden. The project is currently on hold waiting for direction from the Indigenous Community.

3) Division of Finance and Administration

a) AVP Facilities Services

- Supporting development of the Smudging Policy in collaboration with the AVPII.



4) Division of Research and Innovation

a) Assistant Vice-President Research Strategy & Impact

- Supported the Decolonizing Research Administration Research Project and Action Plan
- In collaboration with AVPII successfully followed through on the Action Plan (completed December 2023).
- In collaboration with CIKL and AVPII administers Indigenous Seed Grant Fund.
- In collaboration with CIKL and Faculty of Graduate Studies administers the Dedicated Indigenous Post-Doc awards.

b) The Office of Research Ethics

- Supporting creation and administration of the Indigenous Research Ethics Board.

5) Division of Advancement

a) Leads the Committee to Decolonize and Indigenize Convocation Ceremonies.

b) Supports Indigenous Specific Graduation Celebration, led by ISAY.

6) Division of Equity, People and Culture

a) Hosts and supports the Indigenous Initiatives department.

b) VP EPC Leads National Day for Truth and Reconciliation Day annual events. Leads the Decolonizing, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion strategy work ensuring decolonizing and inclusion work are addressed.

c) AVP Faculty Affairs in collaboration with AVPII supports all hiring committees with specific supports provided to dedicated Indigenous hires.

d) Center for Human Rights Equity, and Inclusion works in collaboration with the AVPII on ensuring CHREDI Center staff have an awareness of Indigenous people's experiences and perspectives as well as background knowledge and understanding of the concept of decolonizing, and the Center's role in contributing to the work of decolonizing the University.

Evaluating

Due to the overwhelming demands placed on Indigenous community members, both within and outside of the University, evaluating what was accomplished in response to the framework has primarily been the responsibility of the AVPII. With this in mind, it will be especially important for the report to be shared with Indigenous community members within and beyond the University, and for all community members to participate in the next phase of work, which will focus on visioning for the future.

Conclusion

This review documents work accomplished across the University in the six years following approval of the *Indigenous Framework for York University: A guide to action*. The review identifies pockets of strength and areas for potential growth, and it draws attention to challenges and barriers. The report provides the Indigenous community with knowledge and understanding of the York context as it works to articulate a plan for moving forward.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions for Indigenous Faculty

- 1) What drew you to York University?
- 2) What do you enjoy about being an Indigenous faculty member at York?
- 3) What do you find difficult/troubling/concerning about being an Indigenous faculty member at York?
- 4) What could York University be doing better to support Indigenous faculty?
- 5) Do you feel supported in your research activities? What more could the University do to support you in accomplishing your activities and goals?
- 6) Are you aware of the [Indigenous Framework](#)? Have you read the Indigenous Framework for York University?
 - If yes, how successful has the University been in accomplishing the framework's goals?
 - What changes do you think need to be made to the framework?
- 7) Any additional comments and feedback you would like to share?

Appendix B: Online Survey Questions for Indigenous Students

- 1) Indigenous presence is well-represented on campus.
- 2) Services for Indigenous students are easily accessible at York.
- 3) Indigenous history, languages, knowledges and cultures are included in my courses.
- 4) Articles written by Indigenous authors have been included in my assigned readings in courses.
- 5) Access to courses taught by Indigenous faculty is available in my department/program.
- 6) Indigenous students' success is well-supported at York.

Appendix C: Interview Questions for Indigenous Students

- 1) What do you enjoy about being a part of the Indigenous community at York University?
- 2) What drew you to York University?
- 3) What do you find troubling/concerning about being an Indigenous student at York?
- 4) What could York University be doing better to support Indigenous students?
- 5) Are you aware of the [Indigenous Framework](#)? Have you read the Indigenous Framework for York University?
 - If yes, how successful has the University been in accomplishing the framework's goals?
 - What changes do you think need to be made to the framework?
 - If no: There are 10 principles. One that applies specifically to students says "...". Do you have any comments or concerns or anything you think we should add?
- 6) Any additional comments and feedback you would like to share? Would you consider York for graduate studies?