

**ANSWERING THE CALL: *WECHEEHETOWIN***

# **CALLS TO ACTION**

**Final Report of the Steering Committee for the University of Toronto  
Response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada**

## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.”

## **Office of Indigenous Initiatives (Tri-Campus)**

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### **INDIGENOUS INITIATIVES AT THE SCARBOROUGH AND MISSISSAUGA CAMPUSES**

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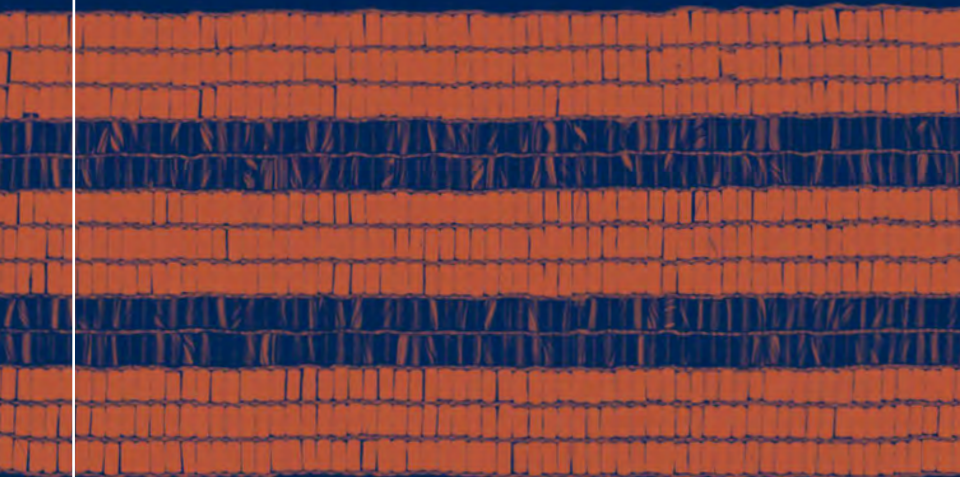
# Contact

## **The Office of Indigenous Initiatives: A Tri-Campus Presence**

The Office of Indigenous Initiatives (OII) was established in response to *Answering the Call Wecheehetowin: Final Report of the Steering Committee for the University of Toronto Response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*. OII is situated within the portfolios of the Vice-President of People Strategy, Equity & Culture and the Vice-President & Provost. Its mandate is to support and guide the U of T community as it continues to work towards reconciliation. Efforts are directed towards listening, coordinating, advising, and collaborating with academic and non-

# About

academic communities in addressing the Calls to Action. The office collaborates on, advises on, and oversees the development and implementation of Indigenous initiatives across the University, conducting regular environmental scans to establish the impact and progress of such initiatives. This work is essential to the process of building relationships among Indigenous and non-Indigenous University and community partners by encouraging Indigenous culture and pedagogy throughout the institution.



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/ Implementation





A person wearing a patterned poncho and a hat is playing a guitar in a field of tall grass. The scene is bathed in a warm, golden light, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The person is in the foreground, and the grass is in the background, creating a sense of depth. The overall mood is peaceful and nostalgic.

# Introduction

## Introduction



This resource has been created as a useful quick reference for the U of T Calls to Action. They are derived from *Answering the Call Wecheehetowin: Final Report of the Steering Committee for the University of Toronto Response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.*

## Introduction

The final report outlined six issues that become the organizational framework for the Calls to Action. They are as follows —→

- **Indigenous Spaces**
- **Indigenous Faculty & Staff**
- **Indigenous Curriculum**
- **Indigenous Research Ethics & Community Relationships**
- **Indigenous Students & Indigenous Co-curricular Education**
- **Institutional Leadership / Implementation**

## Introduction

Our hope is that this resource will assist in answering the calls, serving as a touchstone for the University community to begin to create the changes needed to answer the calls and to work towards Truth and Reconciliation.

The full *Wecheehetowin* report can be viewed at [indigenous.utoronto.ca](https://indigenous.utoronto.ca).



**WE CHEEHEETOWN : CALLS TO ACTION**

— **The Steering  
Committee's  
Calls to Action  
to the University  
of Toronto** —



## LEGEND

- Short-term Call to Action
- Longer-term Call to Action
- Short- & Longer-term Call to Action

## CALLS TO ACTION





# Indigenous Spaces

## Indigenous Spaces

- 1 The University should actively explore the creation of significant dedicated Indigenous space on the St. George campus – possibly as part of the St. George Front Campus redesign process – and include Indigenous stakeholders in all discussions on this issue. This space could include a First Nations House that is sensitively designed to express Indigenous values and aesthetics. It could also include outdoor space appropriate for Indigenous spiritual needs. ■

- 2 A strategy for the funding and placement of more Indigenous public art across all three campuses should be developed, in close consultation with local Indigenous communities. ■
  
- 3 The University should begin planning immediately for the creation of dedicated, appropriate Indigenous spaces on the UTM and UTSC campuses. ■

## Indigenous Spaces

- 4 The University should launch a process to identify and name appropriate spaces on the three campuses using Indigenous languages. ■
- 5 All renovation and new construction on campus should take smudging into consideration in the design process. ■



## CALLS TO ACTION





A photograph of a middle-aged man with short, graying hair, wearing a dark, textured V-neck sweater over a collared shirt. He is looking slightly to the left of the camera with a neutral expression. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent orange color and framed by a thin white border.

# Indigenous Faculty & Staff

Indigenous Faculty & Staff



- 6 The Provost should launch a University-wide initiative to support the hiring of Indigenous faculty by making available targeted funds that could be accessed by divisions on a competitive basis. The aim should be to facilitate the hiring of a significant number of Indigenous faculty members over the next three years. To begin the needed process of inclusion, divisions and departments should consider specifically targeting Indigenous hiring.

Discussion should occur around a range of ways to create incentives for divisions and departments both with and without current Indigenous scholars to ensure Indigenous participation in these hiring processes, especially on hiring committees. ■

## Indigenous Faculty & Staff

- 7 The Provost's Office should seek out additional ways to encourage and facilitate networking opportunities for Indigenous faculty and Indigenous staff. ■
- 8 The Vice-President, Human Resources and Equity's Office should immediately implement a process to conduct exit interviews with any Indigenous faculty and staff who leave University employment. ■
- 9 The Provost's Office should review existing anti-discrimination training materials for hiring committees to ensure that the materials are sensitive to specific issues related to Indigenous peoples. ■

- 10 The Vice-President, Human Resources and Equity should assess existing Indigenous cultural awareness training programs at the University, and launch a discussion across the divisions as to how best to ensure equity and cultural sensitivity amongst faculty, staff, and students. ■■
  
- 11 Each division should actively consider the creation of an Indigenous leadership position within the Office of the Dean. Such positions would have to be meaningful, and targeted to real opportunities that are different across the divisions. They would also have to be properly supported by the entire Decanal team. ■

## Indigenous Faculty & Staff

- 12 The President and the Provost should investigate and consider the creation of an Indigenous Advisory Council made up primarily of members of Indigenous communities external to the University. Such Councils exist at other universities, especially in Western Canada. ■
- 13 The Provost and the Vice-President, Research and Innovation, in close collaboration with the Faculty Association, should convene a working group within the next two years to examine issues related to community-based research, and specifically research in and with

Indigenous communities. This working group could articulate guidelines both for the ethical undertaking of such research and for its assessment in processes of tenure and promotion. ■■

- 14 The University should work actively to increase the number of Indigenous staff members who support important programs, especially those designed to revitalize and strengthen Aboriginal languages, and those that support Indigenous students. Over time, the positions should be funded from core budgets, and not merely as year-to-year add-ons. ■■■

## Indigenous Faculty & Staff

- 15 The Provost's Office, working with the divisions, should seek to expand the current financial support for Elder services, which should be made available to broader segments of the University community. ■
  
- 16 The role and impact of the University's Elders Circle should be examined to ensure that the Circle is properly structured to meet the needs of the University community. The potential role of Elders across the University, including as a resource for the senior leadership, should be better articulated and promoted. The respective roles of the Elders Circle, the existing Council of Aboriginal Initiatives, and the proposed Indigenous Advisory Council would have to be carefully delineated. ■





## CALLS TO ACTION





# Indigenous Curriculum

## Indigenous Curriculum

- 17 The University should work to integrate significant Indigenous curriculum content in all of its divisions by 2025. The Provost should work with the divisions to ensure that specific steps are being taken to launch (or in some cases continue) the needed curriculum reform initiatives. Each division should be evaluated regularly, on its progress towards integrating Indigenous content into the curriculum. ■■
- 18 The Provost should launch an initiative to develop and offer Indigenous learning opportunities for faculty, instructors, staff, and teaching assistants. In addition, the University should create and fund a pool of Indig-

enous curriculum developers, who would ideally be of Indigenous heritage. The curricula they work to develop, in close collaboration with divisions, should be based on Indigenous knowledge and protocols. ■

- 19 The University should work to expand its offerings in Aboriginal languages, building out from local languages to a wider provision, given the size and national (and international) status of the University. Funding for formal Aboriginal language instruction must continue to be predictable and stable; funding for the University's Indigenous Language Initiative, involving outreach within and outside U of T, needs to be predictable and stable. ■■

## CALLS TO ACTION



The image features a bowl filled with dried, dark green herbs, possibly medicinal plants, resting on a light-colored fabric with a dark, repeating geometric pattern. The entire scene is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The text 'Indigenous Research Network' is positioned in the lower right quadrant of the image.

# Indigenous Research Network

## Indigenous Research Ethics & Community Relationships

- 20 The Provost and the Vice-President, Research and Innovation should oversee the development of research training modules that recognize historical patterns of unethical research in and with Indigenous communities. Specific cultural and research ethics training should be made available to any scholar seeking to work in an Indigenous community. ■■
- 21 The University should consider the creation of a Research Ethics Board sub-committee focussed solely on Indigenous-related research. The sub-committee



would be tasked to develop a protocol for coordinating the ethical review with Indigenous communities. ■

- 22** The Vice-President, Research and Innovation should work with other universities, in close collaboration with the granting councils, to convene a joint committee to consider the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, its application to research involving Indigenous peoples and communities, and the fit with existing research funding programs of the granting councils. ■

# CALLS TO ACTION





# Indigenous Students & Indigenous Co-curricular Education

## Indigenous Students & Indigenous Co-curricular Education

- 23 The University should commission an accessible reference guide to Indigenous cultures and history to be made available on the Internet for all U of T faculty, staff, and students. The guide should be prepared and fully vetted by a variety of Indigenous authors. ■
  
- 24 The University should consider the creation of a more visible, single Indigenous web portal to provide one stop for key information for Indigenous students, expanding and diversifying the existing Aboriginal Student Services web page. That portal could also be extended over time for faculty and staff. ■

- 25 The Provost should strike a working group to investigate barriers to access for Indigenous students, examining undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs. The working group should draw on the experiences of divisions that already have targeted admissions programs for Indigenous students. The University might want to consider areas where targeted admissions initiatives are most warranted, seeking to diversify access for Indigenous students into a wider range of academic fields. Given the University's strong research profile, a major focus on Indigenous graduate admissions and retention might be sensible. ■

## Indigenous Students & Indigenous Co-curricular Education

- 26 The University should invest more in publicising existing college pathway programs, and in actively recruiting into those programs and into the existing, targeted Indigenous access and bridging programs. ■
  
- 27 The Provost should charge the working group on barriers to access for Indigenous students (which is recommended above) with examining issues related to Indigenous student housing. ■

- 28 The Provost should commission a detailed study of existing funding mechanisms across the University that could be better deployed to support Indigenous students. The Vice-President, Advancement should design a targeted fundraising initiative to build support for both scholarships and needs-based bursaries for Indigenous students in undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs. ■
  
- 29 The Provost should commission the design of an education module that accurately and respectfully introduces students to Indigenous cultures and histories, with a particular focus on the relationship of Indigenous peoples to the University. The module would be available for the use of all groups involved in co-curricular programming. Indigenous students, staff, and faculty should be deeply involved in the creation of this module. ■

## Indigenous Students & Indigenous Co-curricular Education

- 30 The Vice-Provost, Students should establish a working group to design a sustainable mentoring program for Indigenous students, drawing on volunteer Indigenous faculty, staff, and students to serve as mentors for first-year undergraduate Indigenous students. The program might be expanded to upper-year students as resources allow. ■





CALLS TO ACTION





# Institutional Leadership / Implementation

## Institutional Leadership / Implementation

- 31 The President should embark on discussions with the Vice-President, Advancement regarding fundraising for the priorities set out in this report, and the creation of an overarching Indigenous Reconciliation fund. ■
  
- 32 The President and the Provost should investigate and consider the creation of an Indigenous Advisory Council made up primarily of members of Indigenous communities external to the University, and ensure that it is operating by the end of 2017 at the latest. This body should be tasked with monitoring the implementation of all of the Calls to Action made in this report and the TRC's report. ■

- 33 All divisions should be required to report annually to the Provost on progress in implementing University commitments in relation to the Calls to Action contained in this report. ■
  
- 34 The implementation and monitoring body created by the President and Provost should conduct regular periodic reviews of the University and divisions' progress in implementing the Calls to Action. The periodic reviews should occur every three years to ensure the University remains on track in implementation, and that the Committee's and TRC's recommendations are not forgotten over time. ■■

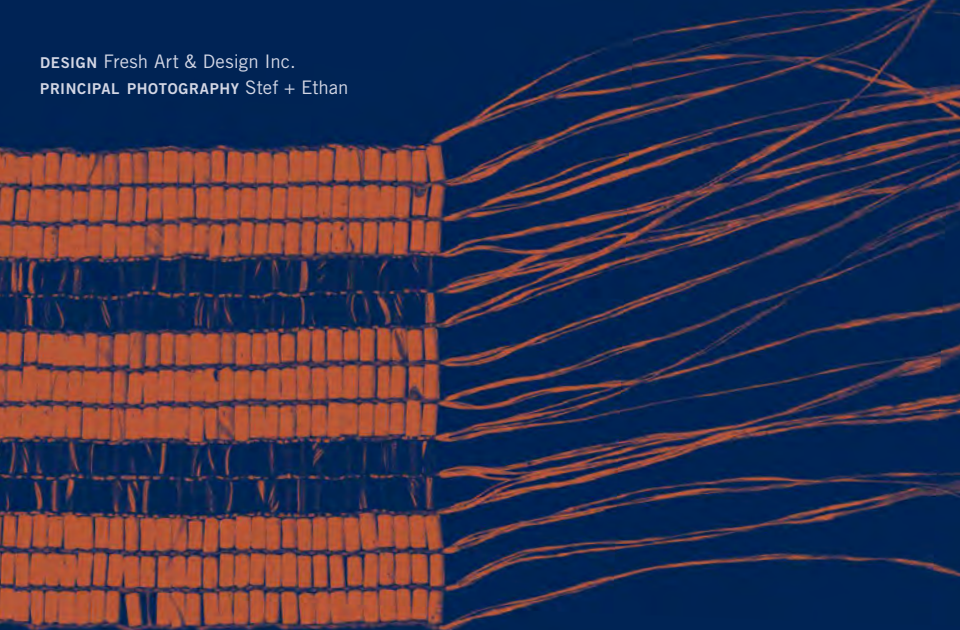
## INDIGENOUS TRAINING

The Office of Indigenous Initiatives has created training modules to further U of T staff, faculty, librarians, and students' understanding of the colonial history of Canada and its impacts on Indigenous peoples.

If you have any questions about the University of Toronto's Office of Indigenous Initiatives' Indigenous Training, or would like a session for your department, please email [indigenous.training@utoronto.ca](mailto:indigenous.training@utoronto.ca)

For more information on the trainings and how to register please visit [indigenous.utoronto.ca](https://indigenous.utoronto.ca).

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UNIVERSITY OF  
**TORONTO**

**Office of Indigenous  
Initiatives**