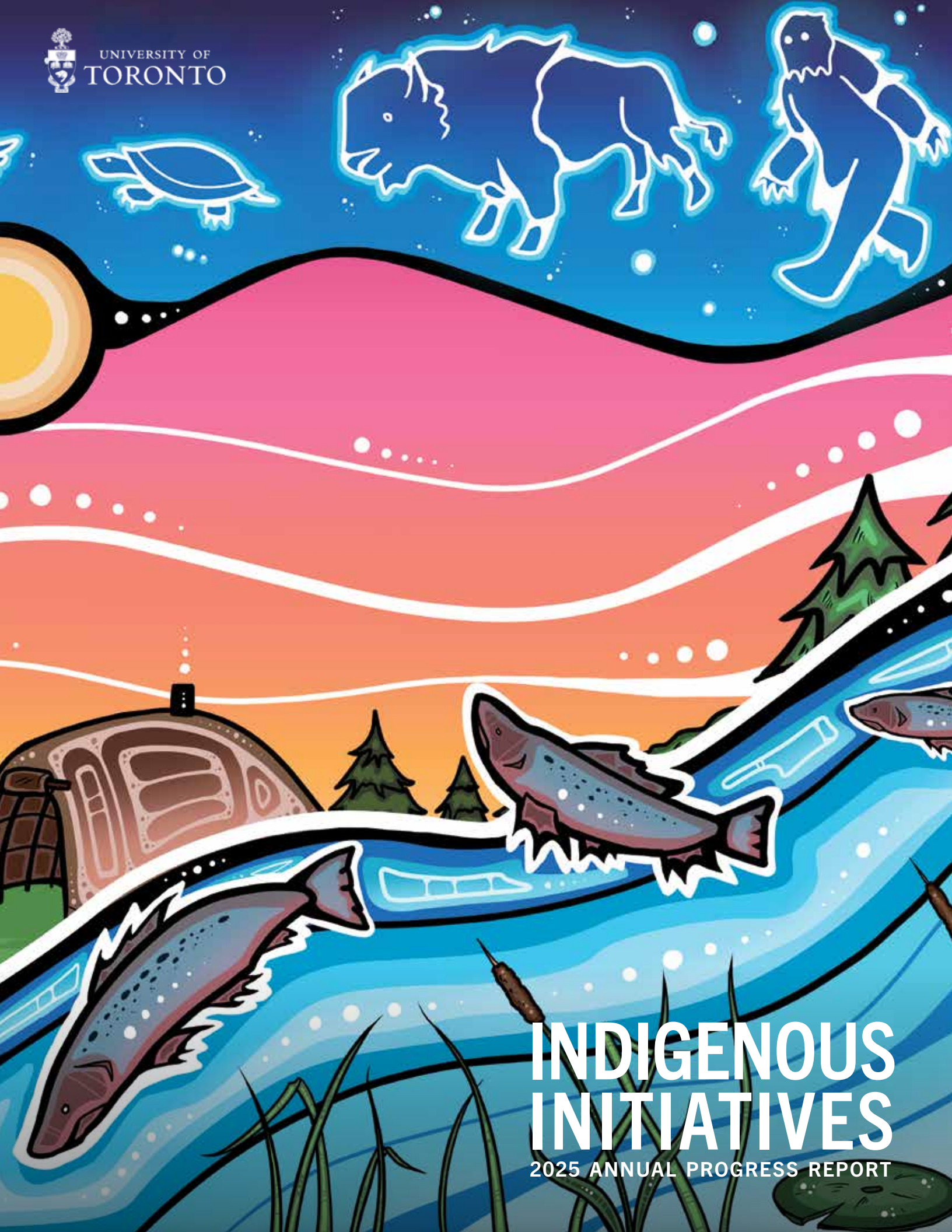




INDIGENOUS INITIATIVES

2025 ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

In 2017, in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada's Calls to Action, University of Toronto (U of T) students, staff, faculty, and Elders released *Answering the Call: Wecheehetowin Final Report of the Steering Committee for the University of Toronto*, a document created to ensure the University was in alignment with the TRC with their own Calls to Action. The U of T report contained 34 Calls to Action, under six major themes. The Office of Indigenous Initiatives (OII) set out to support the actions and institutional changes outlined in the *Wecheehetowin Final Report*, as well as to evaluate the progress made towards truth and reconciliation, by creating the Annual Progress Report, which shares that ongoing journey. The report highlights progress achieved under the six themes identified.





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COVER IMAGE: UTM Library Welcoming Mural created by Anishinaabe artist and UTM student MJ Singleton

Foreword



Shannon Simpson, Senior Director, Office of Indigenous Initiatives (photo by ©The City of Toronto)

section

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This year's work reflects both the strength and the complexity of advancing Indigenous initiatives across our three campuses. We continue to see Indigenous presence deepen through spaces, curriculum, research, governance, and student life. This work is grounded in relationship, accountability, and Indigenous leadership. At the same time, this progress reminds us that reconciliation requires more than intention. It requires sustained resources, structural change, and care for the Indigenous staff, Elders, Knowledge Holders, and community partners who carry this work forward.

AS INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES across our tri-campus grow, so too does our shared responsibility to remove barriers, support Indigenous students and colleagues, and align institutional processes with Indigenous ways of working. Central to this work is our commitment to nurturing and sustaining relationships with neighbouring and local Indigenous communities, ensuring that our efforts remain reciprocal, responsive, and rooted in community priorities.

Reconciliation is collective work, and when we commit to it with humility and consistency, our entire University community benefits. I am deeply grateful to the Elders, Knowledge Holders, students, staff, faculty, librarians, and partners whose leadership, generosity, and persistence continue to shape this journey.”

- SHANNON SIMPSON, ALDERVILLE FIRST NATION,
SENIOR DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF INDIGENOUS INITIATIVES



On behalf of the University of Toronto, I am pleased to recognize the 2025 Indigenous Initiatives Annual Progress Report and to thank the Office of Indigenous Initiatives and Indigenous community members for their leadership. This year's report highlights significant progress in strengthening Indigenous governance, expanding culturally grounded spaces, advancing Indigenous-led research, and supporting Indigenous students, faculty, librarians, and staff across our three campuses.

Guided by *Answering the Call: Wecheehetowin* and the wisdom of Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Holders, and partners, the University continues to advance reconciliation with purpose, accountability, and respect. I am grateful for the dedication driving this work and for the meaningful impact it is having on the University of Toronto community."

- MELANIE A. WOODIN, PRESIDENT

"I am deeply impressed by the extensive work that has been done on Indigenous initiatives at U of T over the past year. The development of the Indigenous Substantiation process, the establishment of the Big-Canoe Chair in Indigenous Health, and the incorporation of Indigenous-focused processes in academic research, research participation, and curriculum all represent great progress for the University. While there is still much to do, these developments provide a strong foundation for ongoing and meaningful engagement with Indigenous ways of knowing and embedding Indigenous considerations across all aspects of our university culture."

- TREVOR YOUNG, VICE-PRESIDENT & PROVOST

"This Annual Progress Report is a testament to the exceptional efforts of students, staff, faculty members, and librarians across our three campuses. Equally, it demonstrates the profound impact of the Office of Indigenous Initiatives, which, since 2017, has been a passionate advocate for Indigenous students and employees and a trusted partner and guide to the entire U of T community. At the same time, the Report reminds us that 'completing actions' is not our destination. Answering the 34 Calls to Action requires creating the conditions for many, sustained, and future actions that will continually support Indigenous presence at this University and meaningfully engage the U of T community in reflecting about what reconciliation means, and what we could become."

- KELLY HANNAH-MOFFAT, VICE-PRESIDENT,
PEOPLE STRATEGY, EQUITY & CULTURE



Land Acknowledgement

The Office of Indigenous Initiatives wishes 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.

Photo by Victoria University
Communications Team.

Institutional Support and Guidance

U of T's senior leadership facilitate ongoing conversations regarding the priorities outlined in *Answering the Call: Wecheehetowin Final Report of the Steering Committee for the University of Toronto Response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* and continue to support, develop, and implement strategies that advance Indigenous presence, the development of partnerships and collaboration, and institutional change that reflects the Calls to Action.

section 2

2025 UTM All-Nations
Powwow (photo by
Nick Iwanyshyn)



Indigenous Substantiation

The University of Toronto Indigenous Substantiation is an Indigenous-led process developed to support accountability and integrity in access to material benefits, opportunities, resources, and recognition intended for Indigenous Peoples. Grounded in community engagement, the process responds to concerns about Indigenous identity fraud



while recognizing the impacts of colonial displacement and disconnection.

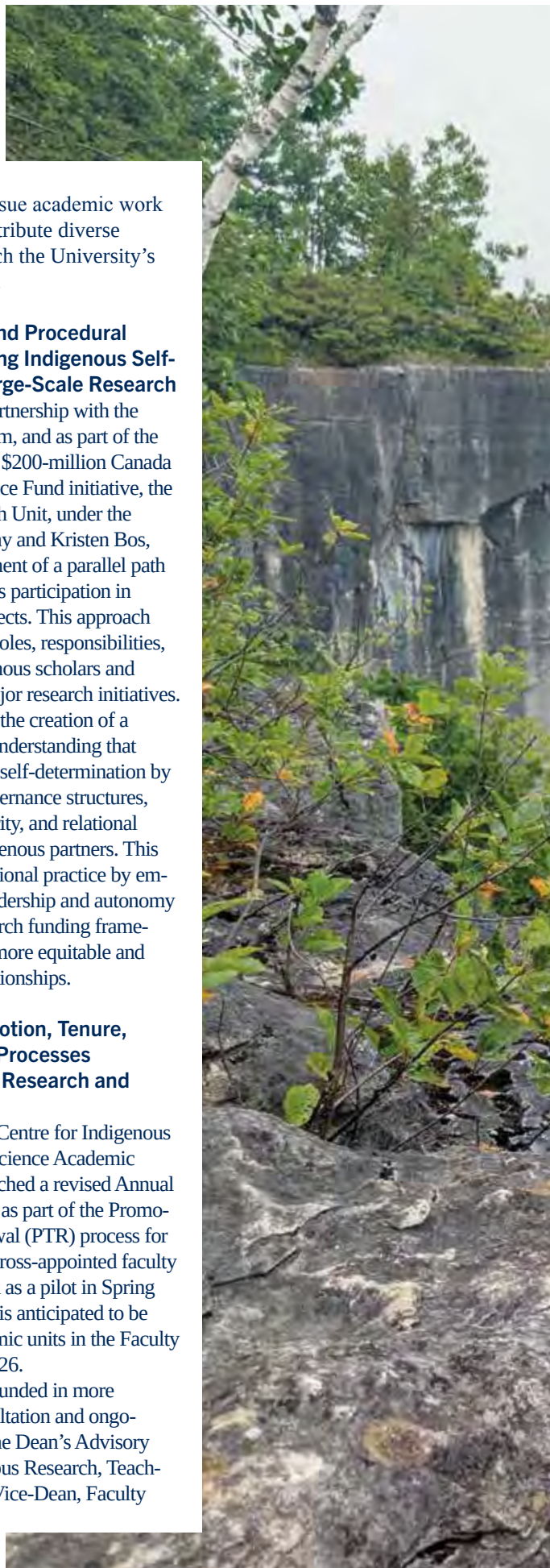
Rather than defining identity, the process assesses whether an individual's claim aligns with community-informed criteria through documented Nation Membership, Citizenship, or Enrolment. Led by the Office of Indigenous Initiatives in collaboration with Indigenous communities, the

pathway prioritizes respect, confidentiality, and fairness, and helps ensure that material benefits intended for or prioritizing Indigenous Peoples reach those communities.

University of Toronto Mississauga (UTM) Indigenous Advisory Council

The Indigenous Advisory Council at the University of Toronto Mississauga →

Rhianna Buck sitting cliffside on Manitoulin Island at the Mnídoo Mnising Indigenous Field School (photo by Paul Pritchard)



provides guidance on Indigenous-related policies and supports coordinated Indigenous governance for UTM-specific, high-level initiatives and special projects. Led by the UTM Office of Indigenous Initiatives, the Council brings Indigenous perspectives into UTM decision-making and helps ensure that initiatives are informed by community knowledge, accountability, and respect.

A Legacy of Leadership in Indigenous Health

A \$5-million endowed Chair in Indigenous Health has been established in the Department of Family and Community Medicine at the Temerty Faculty of Medicine (TFM), aligned with TFM's Indigenous Health Faculty Lead. This transformative gift strengthens the Faculty's long-term commitment to Indigenous Health and reinforces the leadership and continuity of the Indigenous Health Leadership Circle for generations to come.

On December 8, the University gathered to celebrate the naming of the Big-Canoe Chair in Indigenous Health in honour of Dr. John Big-Canoe. The event recognized Dr. Big-Canoe's lasting legacy and contributions to Indigenous health, community leadership, and medical education while marking an important milestone in advancing Indigenous health leadership at the University.

Provost's Postdoctoral Fellowship Program

In 2025, the School of Graduate Studies announced significant enhancements to the Provost's Postdoctoral Fellowship Program. The program expanded both the number of awards and the value of each fellowship, providing \$80,000 per year for up to two years, along with an annual \$5,000 research start-up stipend.

These enhancements increase access to postdoctoral opportunities for scholars from under-represented groups, with a specific focus on Indigenous and Black researchers. Through targeted funding to Graduate Faculties, the program supports the recruitment of postdoctoral fellows, enabling researchers to strengthen their

scholarly profiles, pursue academic work at the U of T, and contribute diverse perspectives that enrich the University's research environment.

Divisional Policies and Procedural Guidelines: Advancing Indigenous Self-Determination in Large-Scale Research

Through an ongoing partnership with the Acceleration Consortium, and as part of the University of Toronto's \$200-million Canada First Research Excellence Fund initiative, the Technoscience Research Unit, under the leadership of M. Murphy and Kristen Bos, supported the development of a parallel path approach for Indigenous participation in large-scale science projects. This approach recognizes the distinct roles, responsibilities, and priorities of Indigenous scholars and communities within major research initiatives.

The work resulted in the creation of a new memorandum of understanding that strengthens Indigenous self-determination by establishing clearer governance structures, decision-making authority, and relational accountability for Indigenous partners. This model advances institutional practice by embedding Indigenous leadership and autonomy within large-scale research funding frameworks, contributing to more equitable and respectful research relationships.

Strengthening Promotion, Tenure, and Renewal (PTR) Processes Through Indigenous Research and Teaching Lenses

In partnership with the Centre for Indigenous Studies (CIS), Arts & Science Academic Human Resources launched a revised Annual Activity Report (AAR) as part of the Promotion, Tenure, and Renewal (PTR) process for all CIS-appointed and cross-appointed faculty members. Implemented as a pilot in Spring 2025, the revised AAR is anticipated to be rolled out across academic units in the Faculty of Arts & Science in 2026.

The revisions are grounded in more than two years of consultation and ongoing dialogue between the Dean's Advisory Committee on Indigenous Research, Teaching, and Learning; the Vice-Dean, Faculty



& Academic Life; and Academic Human Resources. These consultations identified opportunities to amend PTR processes to more accurately reflect the scholarship, service, and teaching contributions of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous faculty members engaged in Indigenous research and teaching.

The revised AAR is supported by an accompanying compendium that provides guidance on revised or expanded evaluation criteria. Early feedback, particularly from Indigenous and non-Indigenous teaching-stream faculty members, indicates that the changes offer greater clarity and improved opportunities to meaningfully represent teaching practices and scholarly contributions within the PTR process.

Indigenous Spaces

Creating welcoming environments for Indigenous staff, librarians, students, and faculty members across all three campuses at U of T has helped serve a symbolic role, signifying that Indigenous Peoples are present on this land and at the University. These spaces support the increasing Indigenous presence on all three campuses, forming stronger ties for the community, contributing to building relationships, and reminding the community of the rich Indigenous history of the land where the University sits. Across our campuses, new Indigenous spaces were planned and established this year.

UTM Library – Indigenous Art Installation

The UTM Library unveiled a large-scale Indigenous mural created by Anishinaabe artist and UTM student MJ Singleton. Drawing inspiration from the natural landscape surrounding the UTM campus and the First Nations who reside on these lands, the artwork reflects themes of relationship, place, and belonging.

The installation enhances Indigenous visibility within the library and contributes to a more inclusive and welcoming learning environment. It also affirms the library's commitment to recognizing Indigenous presence on campus and supporting Indigenous student leadership through creative expression.

Department of Family and Community Medicine – Indigenous Space

The Department of Family and Community Medicine at the Temerty Faculty of Medicine established a dedicated Indigenous space for staff, faculty members, and students. Designed as a welcoming and culturally grounded environment, the

space supports connection, reflection, and community within the department.

The space features wall murals and artwork by Anishinaabe artist Shawn Howe, which centre Indigenous presence and contribute to a respectful and inclusive environment for learning and work.

Faculty of Arts & Science – Indigenous Science, Technology, and Environments Studies Research Hub

In November 2025, the Faculty of Arts & Science launched the Indigenous Science, Technology, and Environments Studies Research Hub (ISTES Hub), a new space dedicated to supporting Indigenous faculty members, students, and community researchers working across science, technology, and environmental studies.

The ISTES Hub responds to the distinct needs of Indigenous researchers by recognizing Indigenous science as encompassing both longstanding knowledge systems and emergent technologies, including arts-based methods, land-based practices, and computational approaches. Through dedi-



cated space, events, materials, research opportunities, and knowledge sharing, the Hub supports Indigenous-led research and collaboration while fostering a community grounded in Indigenous priorities, relationships, and ways of knowing. The ISTES Hub strengthens Indigenous presence at the University and advances research on Indigenous terms.

Emmanuel College – Indigenous Healing Garden

In May 2025, Emmanuel College at Victoria University held a soft opening for the newly completed Indigenous Healing Garden. The gathering marked an important milestone in the creation of a dedicated space for reflection, learning, and community, and affirmed the College's ongoing commitment to Indigenous presence and wellbeing on campus.

Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design – Daniels First Peoples Library

The Daniels First Peoples Library at the

John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design is a collaborative initiative between the Eberhard Zeidler Library and the Daniels First Peoples Advisory Group. Developed as a teaching collection, it supports consultation with faculty members and students on Indigenous knowledge systems, design practices, and histories across the fields of architecture, landscape architecture, forestry, visual arts, and design.

The collection includes approximately fifty curated titles that provide hands-on, point-of-need resources to support research, studio projects, and course development. The library continues to grow through materials selected by the Head Librarian and recommendations from faculty members, students, and First Peoples advisors, ensuring the collection remains responsive to evolving teaching and research needs. Materials are funded and catalogued through the University of Toronto Library system and are accessible by appointment through the Daniels First Peoples Office.

The Department of Family and Community Medicine at the Temerty Faculty of Medicine's dedicated Indigenous space. Murals artwork by Anishinaabe artist Shawn Howe (photo by Kristen Doopan)

Indigenous Faculty and Staff

The recruitment and hiring of Indigenous faculty members, staff, and librarians are fundamental to the ongoing Indigenizing of the institution. These faculty members and staff provide Indigenous perspectives, historical methodologies, and epistemologies. While enhancing curricular developments University-wide, they also foster culturally safe environments across our three campuses that enable Indigenous students and employees to thrive.

Michael Mahkwa Auksi (Anishinaabe, Lac Seul First Nation; Estonian); Coordinator, Indigenous Initiatives, Faculty of Kinesiology & Physical Education (KPE)

Michael Mahkwa Auksi is a former Indigenous Studies undergraduate student and Varsity Blues hockey player at the University of Toronto. His passion and commitment to Indigenous health and wellness have afforded him the pleasure of facilitating physical wellness programs out of McGill University's First Peoples House, working as a peer supporter at Toronto Metropolitan University's Indigenous Services, as well as working





in recreation-based positions out of Anishnawbe Health Toronto and Native Child & Family Services of Toronto.

Mike is completing his doctorate in McGill University's KPE department on the history and limitless futures of hockey in his home community at Lac Seul First Nation. His Master of Social Work dissertation on Indigenous youth development from the perspective of Indigenous Elders, in alignment with a lifetime of athletics, supports his passion for the intersecting social health determinants of education and physical wellness, including the role of post-secondary education in sport ambitions and employment, and movement as medicine and social interconnectedness.

In his new role, Mike will support the KPE community in working collectively towards meaningful reconciliation, focusing on Indigenous curriculum infusion and placemaking. In addition, he will offer culturally informed support for Indigenous students in an advising and systems navigation capacity, providing consultation and assistance as needed.

Paul Pritchard (Michif, Manitoba Métis Federation); Hart House Farm

Paul Pritchard (Michif and member of the Manitoba Métis Federation) is the Manager of Indigenous Education and Land-Based Learning at Hart House Farm. His →



Opposite Page

Paul Pritchard, Hart House Farm (photo by Stef + Ethan)

Bottom

Carmen R. Lansdowne, Assistant Professor of United Church of Canada Studies, Emmanuel College at Victoria University (photo by Neil Gaikwad)

PhD thesis in Sociology examines Indigenous education and pedagogy in the Canadian post-secondary sector, and he has extensive experience leading, supporting, and facilitating land-based educational experiences that bridge academic and community settings in local, regional, and global contexts. In his new role, Paul is leading the establishment of the 7 Generations Food Forest and Medicine Meadow at Hart House Farm, transforming a neglected apple orchard and mowed field into a seven-layered perennial ecosystem and living classroom that offer ongoing opportunities for visitors and volunteers to learn about Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing, land restoration and stewardship, and food security and sovereignty, while

gaining practical knowledge for growing, harvesting, preserving, and preparing traditional foods and medicines.

Carmen R. Lansdowne (Heiltsuk First Nation); Assistant Professor of United Church of Canada Studies, Emmanuel College at Victoria University

Dr. Carmen Lansdowne is Assistant Professor of United Church of Canada Studies at Emmanuel College, Victoria University at the University of Toronto, and an ordained minister. A member of the Heiltsuk First Nation, she served as the United Church of Canada's first Indigenous woman Moderator (2022-2025). Carmen is a scholar, speaker, and facilitator passionate about reconciliation, social justice, and Indigenous ways of being. →





Tianna Tabobondung, Indigenous Learning Strategist, University of Toronto Scarborough Campus (UTSC) (photo by Robbie Harper)

Tianna Tabobondung (Anishinaabe, Wasauksing First Nation); Indigenous Learning Strategist, University of Toronto Scarborough Campus (UTSC)

Tianna Tabobondung is a proud UTSC alumna who later completed her Master of Education at Nipissing University. She brings rich experience in Indigenous student advising from her time at Humber Polytechnic, where she worked closely with Indigenous students to develop culturally grounded programming, meaningful workshops, and strong student relationships.

Tianna is currently pursuing her Doctor of Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education in Social Justice Education, specializing in Workplace Learning and Social Change.

She is excited to return to UTSC in a role that supports Indigenous students through learning strategy development, academic advising, and career-focused workshops. Tianna looks forward to empowering students as they navigate their academic journeys and future goals.

Erin Konsmo (Métis, Manitoba Métis Federation); Staff Research Scholar in Indigenous Science, Technology and Environment, Technoscience Research Unit and Acceleration Consortium

Erin Konsmo is an Alberta-raised Métis (citizen of the Manitoba Métis Federation and registered Métis harvester) fisher, mixed-media artist, and scholar. With a background in environmental studies, Erin pursues research interests including climate justice, Indigenous harvesting practices, fishing, arts-based methodologies, feminist and queer theories, and politicized healing and embodiment. Their arts practice currently focuses on fish scale art, a land-based arts practice that includes harvesting fish and processing and cleaning the scales as well as the vertebrae and bones to create intricate florals. Erin is also a somatic practitioner and educator in climate and social justice movement spaces, and believes in the body as a place for transformation towards what we care about.

Vanessa Gray (Aamjiwnaang First Nation); Community Researcher, Technoscience Research Unit

Vanessa Gray is a longtime advocate for and educator in connecting Indigenous rights to health and environmental protection. Her experience growing up in an Indigenous community surrounded by petrochemical facilities has led to her grassroots organizing including teach-ins, rallies, blockades, and direct action against companies and projects infringing on traditional and inherent rights. She firmly stands in solidarity with many communities and nations faced with similar struggles. She is co-founder of Aamjiwnaang and Sarnia Against Pipelines (ASAP), an Indigenous-led grassroots group that organizes Toxic Tours, leads water ceremonies, and delivers presentations on environmental racism in Canada.

Beze Gray (Aamjiwnaang First Nation); Community Researcher, Technoscience Research Unit

Beze Gray is a two-spirit Anishnaabe, Delaware, and Oneida from Aamjiwnaang First Nation, treaty #29 territory. Beze is also a Youth Coordinator of the Niizh Manidook Hide Camp and one of the producers of a grassroots documentary from the Kijig Collective. Beze is a member of the Jibwaabiigamowag Young People's Council (Aamjiwnaang Youth Council) and co-founder of ASAP. Beze is a grassroots organizer, and has organized cultural and environmental gatherings and actions, including Toxic Tours, Niizh Manidook Hide Camp, and Aamjiwnaang Water Gathering. They focus on re-telling their experience of living in Canada's Chemical Valley and promoting Indigenous culture/language resurgence. Beze also practises Anishnaabemowin, sugar bushing, hide tanning, seed saving, and structure making.

Several new Indigenous faculty appointments and leadership roles have strengthened Indigenous presence across the University:

- **Chase McMurren**, Michif/Métis – Faculty Lead, Indigenous MD Admissions and Chair, Indigenous Student Application Program (ISAP) Advisory Circle, Temerty Faculty of Medicine
- **Jessie Baptiste**, Cree, Little Pine First Nation – MD Theme Lead, Indigenous Health, Temerty Faculty of Medicine
- **Lisa Boivin**, Deninu Kųé First Nation – Assistant Professor, March of Dimes Canada Paul J.J. Martin Early Career Professorship, Department of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy, Temerty Faculty of Medicine
- **Mario Wassaykeesic**, Anishinaabe, *Obesahdekang*, Poplar Hill First Nation – Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream, Centre for Indigenous Studies

These appointments reflect continued efforts to advance Indigenous leadership, strengthen academic programming, and support Indigenous student success across the institution.



Indigenous Curriculum

Guided by the U of T's *Wecheehetowin Final Report*, instructors and programs across all three campuses are working to Indigenize curriculum by meaningfully engaging with Indigenous thought, teachings, and pedagogies, supported internally by staff, librarians, faculty, and other academic units designed to support innovations in teaching and learning. This work varies widely, as some departments and programs are in early stages and are incorporating Indigenous content into their courses, and others are engaging in more robust efforts characterized by deep Indigenous community engagement and direction. Their progress and approaches depend on the readiness of faculty members, programs, and departments, and, crucially, on the participation, interest, and availability of Indigenous collaborators. U of T's commitments and supports help instructors continue this essential work while recognizing that ethical practices and relationships are developed locally and over time.

Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design – Indigenous Curriculum Course

The Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design offers an undergraduate course that introduces students to foundational Indigenous knowledge systems, histories, and contemporary realities. The course emphasizes positionality, inviting students to reflect on identity, community responsibility, and relationships to land and treaty territories while engaging with key concepts such as Indigenization, decolonization, and reconciliation.

Through interdisciplinary perspectives, the course explores Indigenous sovereignty, governance structures, languages, philosophies, and relationships to land, alongside treaty-making traditions, colonial policies such as the *Indian Act*, and their ongoing impacts. Students also examine present-day issues including environmental justice, climate action, gender-based violence, and Indigenous resistance, grounded in key national and international reports and Calls to Action. The course supports critical reflection on settler colonialism and systemic racism, and encourages informed engagement with Indigenous resurgence and self-determination.

Faculty of Kinesiology & Physical Education – New Graduate Course in Indigenous Health and Physical Activity

The Faculty of Kinesiology & Physical Education introduced *KIN 8133: Indigenous Communities, Health and Physical Activity*, a new graduate course developed and taught by Associate Professor Tricia McGuire-Adams. The course examines the relationships between Indigenous communities, health, and physical activity through historical, cultural, and contemporary lenses.

Students engage with topics including settler colonialism, decolonization, and the ongoing impacts of colonial systems on Indigenous health and physical activity in Canada. The course centres Indigenous-led frameworks for health and wellness, emphasizing community-based approaches,



cultural respect, and resurgence. Through this curriculum, students are prepared to work collaboratively with Indigenous communities and to support culturally grounded health promotion initiatives in their future professional practice.

UTM and UTSC – Mnidoo Mnising Indigenous Field School

In collaboration with Caeley and Kiara Genereux (Sheshegwaning First Nation) and Josh and Tina Eshkawkagon (Wiikwemikong Unceded Territory), Paul →

Elder Josh Eshkawkagon's Cleansing Sweat Lodge, Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory (photo by Paul Pritchard)

Pritchard and faculty member Dani Kwan-Lafond took 10 UTM and 11 UTSC students to Manitoulin Island, accompanied by members from UTM's OII, for a seven-day land-based field school. Camping on the land and in community, students learned first-hand from Elders, Knowledge Holders, and community members about the treaty context of the territories on which their learning was taking place; about food sovereignty while processing and smoking trout and touring a food forest; and about traditional foods while foraging wild mushrooms and eating locally harvested moose. They also learned about sacred relationships to land and waters through participating in ceremonies, and about cultural maintenance and renewal while learning Indigenous dances, making crafts, and attending Ontario's largest Powwow.

UTSC – *From Outreach to Relationship: Deepening Indigenous Engagement Conference*

On October 28, 2025, the Office of Indigenous Initiatives at UTSC, in collaboration with the Centre for Teaching and Learning, UTSC Library, and the Pedagogies of Inclusive Excellence Forum, hosted a campus-wide conference titled *From Outreach to Relationship: Deepening Indigenous Engagement*. The gathering invited faculty members, librarians, and staff to engage with foundational and collaborative strategies that foster reciprocal and meaningful relationships with Indigenous Peoples.

The day featured a keynote address by Sheila Cote-Meek, who spoke on the Indigenization of curriculum and inclusive post-secondary education strategies. Participants were also introduced to the *Working in Good Ways* Framework from the University of Manitoba, which offers guidance on building respectful and accountable partnerships grounded in Indigenous knowledge systems.

Eagle Feather Teachings shared by Spiritual Healer Jake Ago Neh and Grandmother Vivian Recollet grounded the

day in cultural knowledge and relational responsibility, reinforcing the importance of approaching curriculum development and institutional change in good ways.

By bringing together educators and campus partners in dialogue and reflection, the conference advanced UTSC's commitment to embedding Indigenous ways of knowing within teaching and learning practices while strengthening relationships with Indigenous communities.

UTM – *Alternative Reading Week Indigenous Experiential Learning Program*

UTM delivered an Indigenous-focused *Alternative Reading Week* program that offers a three-day experiential learning opportunity grounded in cultural safety training and community-led projects connected to Haudenosaunee culture. The program provides students with immersive learning experiences that deepen under-

Drum Talk Tent at
Mnido Mnisig
Indigenous Field
School (photo by
Paul Pritchard)



standing of Indigenous histories, knowledge systems, and contemporary realities.

Through guided engagement and reflection, participants develop greater awareness of relational responsibility, cultural respect, and community accountability, supporting meaningful learning beyond the classroom.

Doris McCarthy Gallery – Theo Jean Cuthand Exhibition Tour and Video Game Demonstration

In Winter 2025, the Doris McCarthy Gallery developed a series of in-class screenings featuring selected works by trans Plains Cree and Scots artist Theo Jean Cuthand as part of his solo exhibition *Love + Numbers*. The programming was integrated into three UTSC courses: *ENG445: Queer Literature and Theory*, *MDSB16: Indigenous Media Studies*, and *VPHB59: Current Art Practices*.

Each screening was curated to align with course content and included pre-assigned readings and guided discussions led by Gallery staff. Students engaged critically with Cuthand's work and its intersections with Indigeneity, queerness, and media.

Cuthand also delivered an exhibition tour and video game demonstration for students in *VPSC70: Interdisciplinary Digital Art*. Through discussion of his video game practice, students examined decolonization in gaming and considered how his work challenges colonial narratives and imagines alternative futures.

Centre for Criminology & Sociolegal Studies – New Undergraduate Course Reimagines Policing

The Centre for Criminology & Sociolegal Studies introduced *Reimagining Policing: Indigenous and Non-Mainstream Approaches to Public Safety*, a 300-level undergraduate special topics course offered in Winter 2025 and taught by PhD candidate Rokhsolyana Shlapak. The course examined Indigenous systems of community safety, self-administered policing, and governance alongside non-mainstream approaches to public safety.

Through engagement with Indigenous knowledge systems and critical discus-

sions on place, responsibility, and relational accountability, students explored how Indigenous approaches to safety intersect with, challenge, and reimagine mainstream policing models. The course reflected the University's continued efforts to integrate Indigenous perspectives into curriculum and to support transformative conversations about justice, governance, and community well-being.

Department of Physical & Environmental Sciences – *The One Dish, One Spoon* Learning Retreat

The Department of Physical & Environmental Sciences at the University of Toronto Scarborough hosted a land-based learning retreat titled *The One Dish, One Spoon* from April 28 to 30, 2025, at the Ecology Lodge Retreat Centre in Mono, Ontario. The retreat aimed to open conversations about strategies for bringing Indigenous Ways of Knowing into higher education.

Facilitated by Cynthia Wesley Esquimaux and Jerry-Lynn Orr, the gathering brought together a small group of UTSC librarians and faculty members. Through land-based teachings, guided dialogue, and shared reflection, participants explored approaches to teaching and learning that centre reciprocity, responsibility, and relationality.

Grounded in the principles represented by the *One Dish, One Spoon Treaty*, the retreat supported ongoing efforts to integrate Indigenous knowledge systems into curriculum and pedagogy, strengthening commitments to respectful and reciprocal educational practices.



Ethical Conduct and Community Relationships

The Wecheehetowin Final Report's Calls to Action emphasize the importance of investing in education to establish ethical research practices while promoting respectful relationships with Indigenous Peoples.



Technoscience Research Unit — Transforming Chemical Risk Management Through Indigenous-Led Partnerships

The Technoscience Research Unit is the steward of a \$22-million New Frontiers in Research Fund Transformation grant supporting a large-scale, multi-institutional research initiative titled *Transforming Chemical Risk Management with Indigenous Expertise*. The project brings together partners from the University of Toronto, the University of Guelph, the University of British Columbia, and Aotearoa New Zealand to

re-envision chemical risk management in the context of environmental crisis.

Grounded in Indigenous research methods and visions of environmental justice, the initiative aims to profoundly transform how pollution and chemical risk are understood and addressed within Indigenous communities, university laboratories and classrooms, regulatory systems, and policy development. The overall project is led by U of T Professor and Technoscience Research Unit Co-Director M. Murphy (Manitoba Métis Federation), alongside Sue

Chiblow (Garden River First Nation) of the University of Guelph and Gunilla Öberg of the University of British Columbia.

Research at the University of Toronto is co-led by Principal Investigator and Technoscience Research Unit Co-Director Kristen Bos (Manitoba Métis Federation). This work focuses on collaborative partnerships with community researchers and scientists to develop an Indigenous chemical risk platform, advance curriculum change, and establish new laboratory protocols. These efforts are undertaken in collaboration with scientists Milica Radisic, Élyse Caron-Beaudoin, and Alán Aspuru-Guzik, reflecting a shared commitment to Indigenous-led, community-engaged environmental research and institutional transformation.

Akni:ho'gwa:s Artist Collective Residency: (Un)Mapping the Territory

Hart House and the Art Museum at the University of Toronto collaborated with the Akni:ho'gwa:s Artist Collective on *(Un)Mapping the Territory*, a Haudenosaunee-led residency that re-examined the University's histories, land, and community through Haudenosaunee perspectives. Artists Courtney Skye and Jeff Doctor grounded the residency in Haudenosaunee ways of knowing, governance, and relationality, inviting the University community to reflect on place, interconnected histories, and renewed responsibilities to the land and to one another.

A central component of the residency was the two-day learning and community gathering, *Dwaihwaohes Tgaqodo'geh* ("We are all researching Toronto together"). The UTM Office of Indigenous Initiatives and Indigenous Centre collaborated as a planning partner for the workshop, working alongside Haudenosaunee Knowledge Holders and artists to support this significant tri-campus gathering. Indigenous leaders, artists, scholars, and community members engaged in teachings rooted in Haudenosaunee knowledge systems, including treaty-making, governance, climate futures, data sovereignty, and the intersections of Indigenous and colonial legal systems.

Participants were given the rare opportunity to view the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt and the Crown's Promise Wampum Belt, guided by Hereditary Chief Dehatgahdohs Cleveland Thomas and Haudenosaunee Confederacy Council Secretary Hohahes Leroy "Jock" Hill, with more than 20 Haudenosaunee traditional leaders in attendance.

The residency reflects a deep commitment to ethical engagement, cross-campus collaboration, and the affirmation of Haudenosaunee knowledge and leadership within the University.

Indigenous Research Network – 52nd Annual Temagami/N'Dakimanan Colloquium

From September 25 to 28, 2025, the Indigenous Research Network joined the *52nd Annual Temagami/N'Dakimanan Colloquium* in n'Dakimanan, the traditional territory of the Teme-Augama Anishinaabe in Northern Ontario, marking the first time the University of Toronto has participated in this longstanding gathering. The event centred on the theme *Living Relationships: Exploring Indigenous Relations to Land and Community*. It brought together U of T students, faculty, staff, and alumni with Teme-Augama Anishinaabe Knowledge Holders and community members for interdisciplinary and land-based learning.

The colloquium featured ceremony, storytelling, canoeing, hiking, film screenings, and community gatherings, creating space to engage with Indigenous self-determination, relationality, and connections to land and water. Participants reflected historical and contemporary experiences of colonialism, resource extraction, and community resilience while fostering shared responsibility to the land.

As a flagship Indigenous Research Network initiative, the colloquium strengthened research-community partnerships and advanced experiential learning grounded in Indigenous knowledge systems and land-based pedagogy.

UTM Office of Indigenous Initiatives – Collaboration with the City of Mississauga Indigenous Relations Team →

The UTM Office of Indigenous Initiatives meets monthly with the City of Mississauga Indigenous Relations team to share updates, identify opportunities for mutual support, and strengthen ongoing collaboration. These regular meetings support relationship-building and coordination across institutional and municipal initiatives.

The collaboration advances shared priorities and helps align work under the city-UTM memorandum of understanding, with a focus on bridging initiatives that support Indigenous communities and foster respectful, reciprocal partnerships.

Office of Vice-President, Research & Innovation – Indigenous Research Education and Capacity Building

The Research Services Office within the Vice-President, Research & Innovation portfolio supported Indigenous research education and capacity building through targeted training for faculty members and research administration staff. Using a portion of the Canada Research Chairs Program Institutional Equity Stipend, the initiative focused on strengthening respectful, reciprocal, and culturally safe engagement with Indigenous scholars and Indigenous community members.

Training was delivered through the Centre for Research & Innovation Support and included cohort-based participation in *The Fundamentals of OCAP®* course offered by the First Nations Information Governance Centre and the San'yas Anti-Racism Indigenous Cultural Safety Training Program – Ontario. The cohort model incorporated weekly discussion-based meetings that encouraged reflection, peer learning, accountability, and the application of course content to participants' research and administrative practices.

In 2025, twelve participants completed the OCAP® series and twenty-four participants completed the Indigenous cultural safety training. Post-course evaluations indicated strong impact, with all OCAP® participants reporting enhanced learning and San'yas participants highlighting the cohort format as supporting deeper engagement and understanding.

Doris McCarthy Gallery – Carl Beam Symposium

On March 12, 2025, *Conversations on Carl Beam's The Columbus Suite* was presented through a partnership between the Doris McCarthy Gallery, the Department of Arts, Culture & Media, and the University of Toronto Scarborough's (UTSC) Office of Indigenous Initiatives. The symposium celebrated the late Ojibwe artist Carl Migwans Beam and explored one of his most ambitious and influential series, *The Columbus Suite*.

The program fostered meaningful dialogue on Beam's artistic practice and contributed to ongoing scholarship surrounding this significant body of work. It brought together members of the Indigenous community at UTSC and the broader Indigenous arts community, strengthening relationships through shared reflection and discussion.

Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design – Talking Water Project

The Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design advanced community-engaged research through *Talking Water*, a project led by faculty member Jane Wolff with contributions from Trina Moyan, First Peoples Advisor, that brings Indigenous and settler Knowledge Holders and experts together to deepen understanding of Toronto's waters. Through walks and shared conversations, the project centres relational learning and place-based knowledge.

The initiative received initial support through the Daniels' Mayflower Grant, with an application submitted to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Insight Grant program to support its development over the next four years. The project reflects a commitment to ethical research practices grounded in collaboration, respect, and shared knowledge creation.

The Department for the Study of Religion – Mounds and Memory Workshop

The *Mounds and Memory* workshop was delivered in connection with the *Earthwork* exhibition at the Art Museum and developed

Indigenous Research Network and the 52nd Annual Temagami/N'Dakimanan Colloquium (photo by Belinda McKay)



in partnership with Hiawatha First Nation and the Serpent Mounds. The workshop was led collaboratively by faculty members Pamela Klassen (Study of Religion), Mikinaak Migwans (Art History/Art Museum) and Chadwick Cowie (Political Science UTSC) of the SSHRC-funded Mounds Research Collective. It brought together U of T faculty and students with participants from Treaty 3 territories and the Kay-Nah-Chi-Wah-Nung Historical Centre.

Grounded in Indigenous knowledge, place-based learning, and community relationships, the workshop created space for dialogue on land, memory, and cultural continuity. The initiative reflects a commitment to ethical engagement through collaboration with Indigenous communities and cultural institutions, and to centring Indigenous leadership in knowledge-sharing and public programming.

Centre for Criminology & Sociolegal Studies – Indigenous Self-Governance and Policing Initiatives

The Centre for Criminology & Sociolegal Studies advanced ethical, community-engaged research through multiple initiatives focused on Indigenous self-governance, community safety, and self-administered policing.

Led by Associate Professor Beatrice Jauregui, two interrelated research projects supported by the Connaught Community Partnership Research Program and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council emphasize long-term relationship-building, reciprocity, and Indigenous jurisdiction.

The first project, *Community Peacekeeping, Law and Justice in Kahnawà:ke*, is conducted in partnership with the Kahnawà:ke Peacekeepers Services Board and brings Indigenous community members and University of Toronto scholars together to collaboratively examine historical and contemporary practices of community safety and governance. Grounded in Haudenosaunee principles and the Kayanerenkó:wa, the research supports community-defined priorities, informs policy and program development, and contributes to broader conversations on Indigenous self-determination.

The second project examines Indigenous self-administered policing across Turtle Island, building on established relationships with Indigenous-led organizations and government partners, including the First Nations Chiefs of Police Association and other national and regional bodies. This work traces the historical evolution of self-administered policing and its role within movements for Indigenous self-determination, generating knowledge that supports policy development and governance capacity.

Complementing this faculty-led research, PhD candidate Roksoyana Shlapak has engaged in long-term, community-based doctoral research with the Akwesasne Mohawk Police Service and the Akwesasne community. Her work centres community and police perspectives on self-administered and community policing, with an emphasis on knowledge mobilization that directly supports strategic and operational planning. Through iterative sharing of findings with community partners, the research contributes to both local practice and national conversations on First Nations policing.

Together, these initiatives reflect a sustained commitment to ethical research grounded in Indigenous governance, accountability, and reciprocal community relationships.



Indigenous Students and Indigenous Co-Curricular Education



U of T continues to work towards Indigenous recruitment and the creation of an environment where current and future Indigenous students can thrive. Prioritizing Indigenous supports and cultural activities leads to the fulfillment of students in their educational journey by helping them feel connected to the community and ensuring that they feel acknowledged along the way. In addition, the University initiatives described below raise awareness and provide learning opportunities for non-Indigenous students.

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation
and Orange Shirt Day at Hart House,
University of Toronto St. George campus
(photo by Polina Teif)



Orange Shirt Day/National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, Tri-Campus

Across the University of Toronto, faculties and units hosted events and initiatives to commemorate Orange Shirt Day and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, creating opportunities for reflection, learning, and community engagement.

The University of Toronto community came together on September 30, 2025, to observe Orange Shirt Day and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, a moment to honour Survivors of the residential

school system and remember the children who never returned home. The University-wide commemoration featured keynote speaker Carey Newman (traditional name Hayalthkin'geme), a multi-disciplinary artist, master carver, filmmaker, author, and public speaker whose work explores colonial history and Indigenous resilience. Newman shared personal reflections on creativity, identity, and the ongoing journey towards truth and reconciliation, exemplifying the day's focus on listening, learning, and deepening understanding. The program →



also included remarks from University leadership and offered both in-person and livestream options to engage alumni, students, faculty members, and staff in collective reflection and commitment to reconciliation.

Additional initiatives were held across all three campuses:

- *UTM Office of Indigenous Initiatives* marked Orange Shirt Day through the unveiling of an Indigenous-language welcoming mural in the UTM Library created by Anishinaabe artist and UTM student MJ Singleton, enhancing Indigenous visibility and presence on campus.
- *University of Toronto Scarborough* hosted a Reflective Walk for Reconciliation, Survivors' Flag Raising, and Teaching on September 19, 2025. The campus community gathered to reflect on individual and collective commitments to reconciliation. The Survivors' Flag was raised with an opening from Jake Charles, a traditional Anishinaabe knowledge sharer from the Chippewas of Georgina Island. UTSC also hosted a Community Fire and Gathering for Orange Shirt Day on September 29, bringing Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members together to share space, listen, and learn around the fire.
- *Office of the Vice-Provost, Students, and the Sexual Violence Prevention & Support Centre (University of Toronto St. George Campus)* hosted *Crafternoon Tea: Honouring Every Child Matters* on September 30, 2025. The event offered a facilitated crafting space, providing opportunities for reflection, decompression, and community connection in recognition of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.
- *The Black Research Network* held a virtual event on September 30 featuring recipients of the Black Indigenous Waterways Fellowship, including Jade Nixon, Postdoctoral Fellow, and kara lynch, artist-in-residence. The gathering highlighted Indigenous and Black perspectives through scholarship and creative practice focused on land and waterways.
- *Henry N.R. Jackman Faculty of Law* delivered Orange Shirt Day programming that included a beaded orange pin workshop and film screenings of *Sugarcane* and *The Secret Path*, offering opportunities for learning and reflection on Indigenous histories and experiences.
- *Rotman School of Management*, in partnership with Gender and the Economy, hosted author David A. Robertson, a

Opposite Page

Jackman Faculty of Law's Anishinaabe Law Camp at Chippewas of Rama First Nation (photo by Andrea Johns)

Bottom

REDress Awareness Memorial, University of Toronto Scarborough (photo by Don Campbell)

member of Norway House Cree Nation and two-time Governor General's Literary Award winner, during the week of Truth and Reconciliation. Moderated by Dr. Jordyn Hrenyk, Métis postdoctoral fellow, the discussion explored themes from 52 *Ways to Reconcile* and examined how reconciliation can be practised in daily life and professional settings.

- Victoria University commemorated the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation with a keynote lecture by alumnus Shane Joy in September 2025, creating space for reflection and dialogue on reconciliation.

Faculty of Arts & Science – *Indigenous Research Ethics Symposium*

In 2025, the Dean's Advisory Committee on Indigenous Research, Teaching,

and Learning, in collaboration with the Indigenous Research Network, welcomed more than 150 students, researchers, faculty members, and community members to a day of shared learning at the Arts & Science *Indigenous Research Ethics Symposium*.

The symposium highlighted the ethical practices and research of nine Indigenous faculty members appointed in the Faculty of Arts & Science who work in partnership with Indigenous organizations and communities to advance community-identified priorities. Discussions centred on relational, Indigenous-led approaches to research engagement across the sciences, social sciences, and humanities, offering participants an opportunity to reflect on ethical responsibility, accountability, and care in Indigenous research contexts. →



Top

Beading Circle at Jackman Faculty of Law for National Day for Truth and Reconciliation/ Orange Shirt Day (photo by Andrea Johns)

Bottom

Corn Husk Dolls made by students & staff at Tea & Talk with lehnhotonkwaw Bonnie Jane Maracle (photo by Jenny Blackbird)

The program concluded with a keynote conversation between the Commissioner of Indigenous Languages, Ronald E. Ignace, and language advocate and practitioner Karihwakeron Tim Thompson, followed by a feast and Haudenosaunee social hosted by the Indigenous Research Network. Together, these gatherings reinforced the importance of relationship-building, knowledge-sharing, and community-centred approaches within co-curricular learning.

REDress Awareness Week at UTSC

The University of Toronto Scarborough marked REDress Awareness Week through a series of events dedicated to raising awareness about Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit People. Organized by UTSC's Office of Indigenous Initiatives in collaboration with Athletics & Recreation at UTSC, the week aligned with the annual Women's Memorial March and Strawberry Ceremony held on February 14 in cities across the country.

Through education, reflection, and community engagement, the initiative created space for learning about the ongoing impacts of colonial violence and for honouring the lives of Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit People. By partnering across campus units and connecting local programming to national movements, UTSC reaffirmed its commitment to advocacy, remembrance, and collective responsibility in advancing reconciliation.

Jackman Faculty of Law – Indigenous Student Participation in the Indigenous Bar Association Conference

The Henry N.R. Jackman Faculty of Law supported ten Indigenous law students to attend the Indigenous Bar Association Conference in Vancouver. The conference provided students with opportunities to engage with Indigenous legal professionals, strengthen professional networks, and deepen their understanding of Indigenous law, advocacy, and leadership within the legal profession.

Participation in this national gathering supported students' academic and professional development while affirming the Faculty's commitment to Indigenous student success and community connection.

Accessibility Services – Supporting Indigenous Students and Advancing Truth and Reconciliation

In 2025, Accessibility Services on St. George campus developed new promotional materials to clearly outline the supports available to Indigenous students. These resources highlight the roles of the



Accessibility Services Indigenous Liaison and the Indigenous Accessibility Advisor, ensuring that students are aware of culturally responsive supports and pathways to access services.

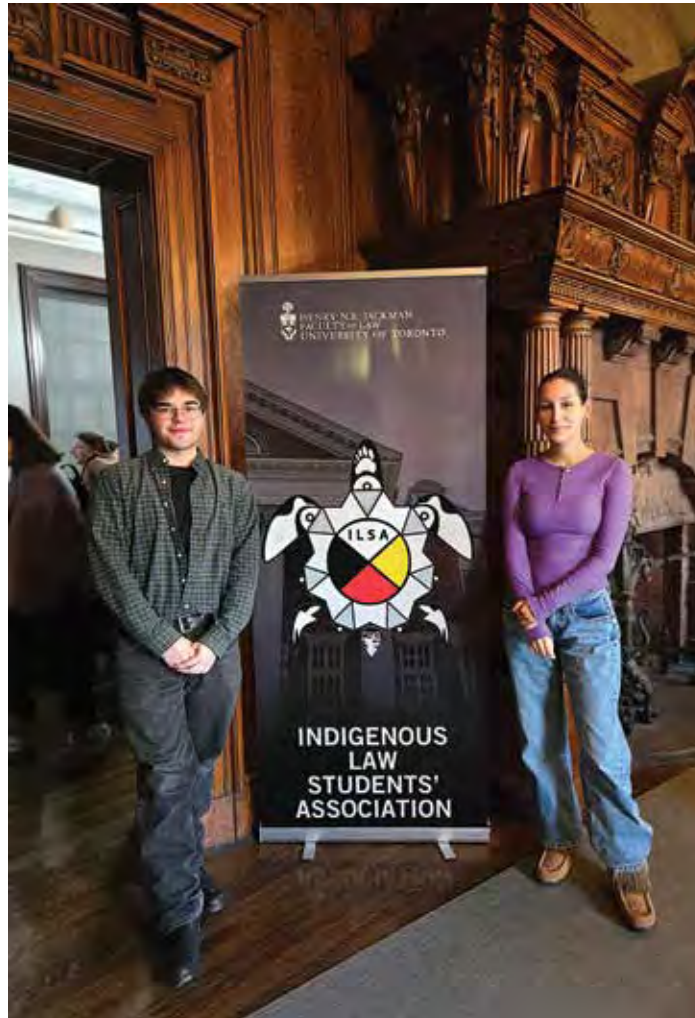
Accessibility Services also published *Accessibility Services (St. George Campus) Response to the University of Toronto Calls to Action on Truth and Reconciliation* in April 2025. The document articulates the unit's commitments and actions in response to the Calls to Action, outlining steps taken to advance culturally safe, inclusive, and accountable accessibility practices for Indigenous students. Together, these initiatives strengthen awareness, transparency, and institutional responsibility within co-curricular student supports.

Office of the Vice-President & Provost — Indigenous Learning Experiences Program

The Office of the Vice-Provost, Students, Student Life, and the Centre for International Experience launched the Indigenous Learning Experiences program, a new initiative designed to support international students in learning about the histories, cultures, and contemporary issues facing Indigenous Peoples in Canada. The program creates space for experiential learning and dialogue that centres Indigenous voices and perspectives.

Through a series of guided activities, participants engaged in a welcome dinner and sharing circle focused on local and global impacts of colonization, an Indigenous art tour at the Art Gallery of Ontario, participation in an Indigenous healing circle and reflection at the Hart House Farm Wellness Retreat, and a workshop on barriers to reconciliation led by the Office of Indigenous Initiatives. The program fosters greater understanding, respect, and relational awareness, supporting meaningful learning beyond the classroom.

Access Strategy & Partnerships Office — *Etuaptmumk: Two-Eyed Seeing* Fireside Chat



The Access Strategy & Partnerships Office (ASPO) hosted *Etuaptmumk: Two-Eyed Seeing*, a fireside chat exploring access to the University of Toronto through multiple perspectives. Moderated by ASPO Director Helen Tewolde, the dialogue centred Indigenous Ways of Knowing alongside Western approaches, reflecting the Mi'kmaw/Mi'kmaq principle of Two-Eyed Seeing.

The event aligned with ASPO's focus on access to post-secondary education for Indigenous learners and created space for discussion on inclusive, multidimensional approaches to access. Through dialogue and reflection, participants engaged with strategies to better support Indigenous →

Evanne Bell and
Cameron Smith,
Indigenous
Law Students'
Association Career
Fair (photo by
Andrea Johns)

learners and advance equity in post-secondary education.

Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design – Access and Outreach Program

The Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design launched *Building Indigenous Representation at Daniels (BIRD)*, a pilot access and outreach program focused on strengthening pathways for Indigenous youth into architecture, design, landscape architecture, forestry, and visual studies. Through workshops, open houses, and community-based learning, the program introduces Indigenous students to post-secondary pathways while centring Indigenous knowledge and design principles.

Delivered during the 2025–26 academic year, the initiative engages Indigenous youth from Kapapamahchakwew (Wandering Spirit School) and the broader urban Indigenous community, supports mentorship by Indigenous Daniels students, and advances the University’s Calls to Action by addressing barriers to access and representation.

Doris McCarthy Gallery – *Love + Numbers*

In Winter 2025, the Doris McCarthy Gallery presented *Love + Numbers*, a solo exhibition by trans Plains Cree and Scots artist Theo Jean Cuthand, curated by Wanda Nanibush. Drawing from his lived experiences at the intersections of trans identity, Cree culture, and bipolar disorder, Cuthand’s work explores sexuality, politics, radical histories, and the treatment of mental health, Indigenous Peoples, and land.

The exhibition featured a selection of video works from the 1990s to the present, ranging from diaristic reflections to performative and politically engaged narratives. A slate of public programming activated the exhibition, including an artist talk by Cuthand; a discussion between Cuthand and his mother, artist Ruth Cuthand; and a conversation between Cuthand and Nanibush. These events were

open to students, librarians, staff, faculty members, and the broader public, fostering dialogue across campus and community.

In addition to its public programming, the Gallery developed curricular initiatives connected to the exhibition, further strengthening its integration into teaching and learning at UTSC.

Rotman School of Management – Indigenous Marketplace

The Rotman School of Management, in collaboration with First Nations House, hosted an Indigenous Marketplace featuring nineteen Indigenous vendors from the University community and beyond. The event created space to celebrate Indigenous entrepreneurship, creativity, and knowledge-sharing.

The marketplace served as a site of cultural exchange and learning for Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members. Through their direct engagement with Indigenous creators, participants learned about Indigenous practices and perspectives while supporting Indigenous-led businesses and strengthening community connections.

Indigenous Cultural Exchange Event at First Nations House

The Centre for International Experience, in collaboration with First Nations House, hosted *Language, Kinship and Identity: Indigenous Reflections from Aotearoa to Turtle Island* on September 29, 2025. The alumni event brought together recent graduates Kristen Daigle and Bailey Bornyk to share reflections from an Indigenous-to-Indigenous exchange experience connecting Aotearoa and Turtle Island.

Organized in partnership with Education New Zealand Manapou ki te Ao, the Ngāti Rangī iwi, and Whenua Iti, the event created space for alumni and students to engage with Indigenous perspectives on identity, language, and relational responsibility. Through storytelling and dialogue, participants were invited to reflect on Indigenous-led learning and their roles as allies and community members within a global Indigenous context.





Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design – *Sikumit Aisimajugut / At Home on Ice* Exhibition

The Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design presented *Sikumit Aisimajugut / At Home on Ice*, an exhibition curated by Mason White and held at the Larry Wayne Richards Gallery from December 2025 to February 2026. The exhibition explored concepts of home and housing in Inuit Nunangat, examining domestic spaces, community life, and the broader systems and policies that shape housing across Inuit regions.

Through drawings, archival materials, and artworks, the exhibition centred Inuit experiences and perspectives while engaging students and visitors in learning about Indigenous housing, design, and lived realities. The exhibition supported co-curricular learning through public engagement, research dissemination, and Indigenous-focused design inquiry.

Rotman Commerce – Consult for Impact Program Partnerships

Through the Consult for Impact program, Rotman Commerce students provide pro bono consulting services to Indigenous-led organizations, including Indigenous Box and Trust Net. These partnerships support Indigenous organizations in scaling their impact while offering students meaningful experiential learning opportunities grounded in equity and community engagement.

By centring Indigenous perspectives in client recruitment and project delivery, the program amplifies Indigenous voices, supports economic empowerment, and strengthens respectful, collaborative relationships. The Consult for Impact program continues to seek new partnerships with Indigenous-led organizations each semester, ensuring that experiential learning remains responsive and aligned with broader equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility goals.

Challenges

As part of the University's responsibilities to accountability and the process of evaluating progress made towards implementing the 34 Calls to Action presented in the *Wecheehetowin Final Report*, the OII requested feedback from U of T departments, offices, centres, faculties, and campuses about challenges experienced by Indigenous students, staff, faculty members, and librarians across the institution. In addition, OII asked what supports were needed to overcome these challenges in the future. Notable themes that emerged from the responses are as follows:

- Limited capacity and staffing to meet the growing demand for Indigenous programming, student supports, consultation, and community engagement across faculties and campuses.
- High demand on Indigenous staff, Elders, and Knowledge Holders, many of whom are supporting multiple initiatives simultaneously across the University, contributing to workload pressures and sustainability concerns.
- Transition and recruitment challenges related to Elders and Knowledge Holders, with increasing difficulty identifying and retaining individuals who can meet institutional demand while maintaining community responsibilities.
- Fiscal constraints that limit the ability to sustain and expand Indigenous initiatives, secure appropriate venues, and respond flexibly to emerging priorities. While Indigenous events consistently attract strong interest from both the University and broader community, attendance is often capped due to space limitations and associated costs.
- Challenges related to coordination, sustainable resourcing, and alignment of institutional processes with Indigenous-led timelines, particularly as the scope and complexity of Indigenous initiatives continues to grow.

The University recognizes that addressing these challenges requires long-term commitment, coordinated approaches, and sustained investment to support Indigenous leadership, community relationships, and reconciliation efforts across all campuses.

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2025 UTM All-Nations
Powwow (photo by
Nick Iwanyshyn)



Next Steps, Looking Forward

U of T remains committed to its role in advancing reconciliation across our three campuses in ways that are relevant to and collaborative with Indigenous members of the U of T community and the host nations. As OII continues to grow, so will its impact on the U of T community in advancing Indigenous initiatives with transparency, accountability, and proficiency.

Campus Builds Across All Three Campuses

The University of Toronto continues to advance the development of dedicated Indigenous spaces across all three campuses, reflecting a sustained institutional commitment to Indigenous presence, visibility, and community. These builds are a direct response to the Calls to Action outlined in *Answering the Call: Wecheeetowin Final Report of the Steering Committee for the University of Toronto*, which emphasized the importance of creating and expanding Indigenous spaces as foundational to reconciliation and institutional change.

At the University of Toronto Scarborough, Indigenous House, anticipated to open in 2026, will provide a purpose-built facility and surrounding outdoor space for learning, ceremony, and gathering. The space will support Indigenous research, curriculum-building, recruitment initiatives, and community engagement while celebrating Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

On St. George campus, plans are underway for a new Indigenous Hub that will serve as the future home of Indigenous Student Services, the Centre for Indigenous Studies, and the Office of Indigenous Initiatives. This

development represents a significant step towards strengthening coordination, accessibility, and community connection in a central location on campus.

At the University of Toronto Mississauga, planning is also progressing towards the development of a dedicated Indigenous building that will further enhance space for cultural programming, student supports, and community engagement.

Together, these campus builds represent long-term investments in Indigenous students, staff, faculty members, and communities, and signal the University's ongoing commitment to reconciliation and institutional transformation.

Designation of Indigenous Peoples Day as a Presidential Holiday

Beginning in 2027, the University of Toronto will designate Indigenous Peoples Day, observed on June 21, as a presidential holiday. This designation affirms the University's commitment to honouring Indigenous Peoples and creates dedicated space for reflection, learning, and recognition across the institution.

Establishing Indigenous Peoples Day as a presidential holiday acknowledges the enduring presence, histories, and contributions →

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of Indigenous Peoples and supports opportunities for the University community to engage in meaningful reflection. This step represents an important institutional action aligned with the University's ongoing commitments to truth, reconciliation, and Indigenous recognition.

UTSG – Campus Master Plan

The University of Toronto will continue advancing the St. George Campus Master Plan through ongoing collaboration with Indigenous communities at the University. Indigenous perspectives, priorities, and ways of knowing have informed the development of the long-term vision for the campus, ensuring that Indigenous presence, relationships to land, and responsibilities to place are meaningfully reflected in future planning.

Looking ahead, this work will support a campus vision that integrates Indigenous influence into the physical, cultural, and relational fabric of the University. By embedding Indigenous considerations into long-range planning, the Master Plan contributes to creating spaces that are welcoming, reflective, and accountable to Indigenous communities and that advance the University's broader commitments to reconciliation and respectful stewardship of land.

UTSC – Director, Indigenous Initiatives

Looking ahead, the University of Toronto will establish a new senior leadership role, Director, Indigenous Initiatives, at the University of Toronto Scarborough campus. This position will strengthen Indigenous leadership capacity at UTSC and support the continued growth, coordination, and sustainability of Indigenous initiatives on the campus.

The Director, Indigenous Initiatives, will provide strategic leadership across areas including Indigenous student supports, community relationships, curriculum and research engagement, and the implementation of institutional commitments outlined in the *Wechehetowin Final Report*. The creation of this role reflects the University's commitment to resourcing Indigenous initiatives appropriately and ensuring that Indigenous-led priorities are advanced through dedicated, campus-based leadership.

UTM – Learning through the Landscape Initiative

Through the support of a Learning & Education Advancement Fund (LEAF) grant, the University of Toronto Mississauga will advance *Learning through the Landscape*, an initiative that creates an outdoor learning space, a digital Geo Trail, and a student showcase grounded in Mi'kmaq/Mi'kmaw Two-Eyed Seeing. The project brings together Western sciences and Indigenous knowledges to support place-based, interdisciplinary learning.

Looking ahead, this initiative will provide opportunities for students to engage with the land as a site of teaching and learning while strengthening Indigenous perspectives within environmental education and experiential learning at UTM. The project reflects a commitment to innovative, land-based approaches that centre relationships, responsibility, and multiple ways of knowing.

Research Collaboration Supporting Kichwa Indigenous Youth Mental Health

The University of Toronto will advance a new international research collaboration focused on supporting the mental health of Kichwa Indigenous youth in Ecuador through the development of a culturally grounded digital game. The project responds to community-identified priorities and recognizes that Western frameworks of mental health do not align with Kichwa worldviews and lived experiences.

Coordinated by Dalla Lana School of Public Health student Emilia Zamora and supervised by Professor Anita Benoit from the Department of Health and Society, the project is developed in close collaboration with Fundación Kyllkay-Ecuador. Supported by a \$52,000 Connaught Community Partnership grant, the initiative builds on Fundación Kyllkay-Ecuador's longstanding work with Indigenous youth and addresses the urgent need for culturally relevant mental health supports.

Looking ahead, the project aims to centre Kichwa knowledge, values, and approaches to well-being while demonstrating the role of community-driven, Indigenous-led research partnerships in advancing ethical, responsive global health research.

Hand Drums, Indigenous Gathering, Hart House Farm (photo by Jessica Tabak)



DESIGN: FRESH ART & DESIGN INC.

