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THE FEDERATION OF STUDENTS

Since 1967, the Federation of Students (Feds) has existed as the official voice of undergraduate students of the University of Waterloo.

In that capacity, Feds undertakes activities both on and off campus to serve, empower and represent students. Feds operates eight commercial services, 12 student-run services, encompasses nearly 300 clubs, supports student societies, and oversees Orientation Week, Welcome Week and a number of other special events held on campus.

Feds lobbies the government on behalf of undergraduates and ensures positive relationships between students and the municipality. Feds is a founding of the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance (OUSA), as well as the federal collective the Undergraduates of Canadian Research-Intensive Universities (UCRU). Feds' day-to-day operations are run by an elected Executive team comprised of a President and three Vice Presidents: VP Operations and Finance, VP Internal, and VP Education. They, in turn, are held accountable by Students' Council, comprised of elected representatives from each Faculty and College at the University of Waterloo, and an elected Board of Directors.

OUR MISSION

To serve, empower and represent the undergraduate students of the University of Waterloo.

OUR VISION

To support a united and empowered undergraduate community where students pursue both learning and personal fulfillment, and provide a campus with diverse and numerable opportunities for pleasurable and meaningful life experiences.


OUR VALUES

- 1 We respect that students are the stakeholders of the Federation of Students and the primary reason for our existence.
- 2 We enhance the quality of life for students by promoting a safe, secure and environmentally conscious campus.
- 3 We strive for innovation and continuous improvement in all that we do to increase the level of service offered to students.
- 4 We seek to maintain a fair and reasonable academic environment conducive to student discussion on all issues.
- 5 We strive for unity in our campus community by promoting diversity and equity in all aspects of campus life.
- 6 We demonstrate an accountable Feds through transparency, communication and responsiveness to ensure sound financial management.
- 7 We work with students to help them discover their potential, determine future goals, and allow for personal reflection.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper seeks to address the systemic barriers that prevent Indigenous students at the University of Waterloo from accessing and succeeding in post-secondary education. The paper advocates for territorial acknowledgement, larger Indigenous spaces, increases in financial assistance, more data and research on Indigenous students, staff and faculty at the University of Waterloo, inclusion of Indigenous knowledge in curricula, and the hiring of more Indigenous staff and faculty across all departments and faculties.

Reconciliation is not solely an Indigenous aspiration; it is a Canadian one. For reconciliation to succeed in post-secondary institutions, we must make these changes internally within the core of our institutions, including the engagement of all faculty and staff members, students, alumni, donors, university administrators and community partners. Post-secondary institutions should not fear reconciliation as a burden, but rather embrace it as a process that involves both Indigenous and non-Indigenous parties collaborating to create a mutually respectful, prosperous, and sustainable community. It is our sincere hope that members of the University of Waterloo's forthcoming Indigenization Strategy Advisory Committee find the following helpful in arriving at a collaborative University-wide response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to Action.

TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Federation of Students would like to acknowledge that we are on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (Neutral), Anishnaabeg, and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, land promised to Six Nations, which includes six miles on each side of the Grand River.

We would like to acknowledge the history of this traditional territory and the growing Indigenous student population at the University of Waterloo who come from many First Nations, Inuit, and Metis communities. Acknowledging this territory is not only Indigenous protocol, it is also one of the many steps along the road of reconciliation and healing.

PURPOSE

The goals of this report are to:

- A) Increase support and ensure institutional commitment to develop more opportunities on all campuses for Indigenous undergraduate students and staff at the University of Waterloo;
- B) Recognize the importance of Indigenizing the curriculum and academic programs across all departments on all campuses at the University of Waterloo;
- C) Acknowledge and continue building a welcoming environment on all campuses at the University of Waterloo, including culturally appropriate spaces through implementation of better support services;
- D) Recognize the value and significance of the Indigenous student population at the University of Waterloo and continue to maintain a positive and collaborative relationship with Indigenous students;
- E) Continue to maintain a successful post-secondary experience and institutional support for Indigenous students on all campuses at the University of Waterloo.

TERMINOLOGY

For the purposes of this report, the term ‘Calls to Action,’ as set out by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC), will be used repeatedly. As in the TRC report, our ‘Calls to Action’ highlights steps essential to moving reconciliation forward at the University of Waterloo.

The 1982 Canadian Constitution recognizes three groups of Aboriginal peoples: First Nations (Indians), Métis, and Inuit, each with diverse and unique histories, cultures, languages and beliefs.

Based on Indigenous student and staff consultation, it is recommended that the University of Waterloo adopt the term “Indigenous,” as the term Aboriginal has been given to the Indigenous peoples in Canada by the state¹. Furthermore, the term “Indian” has moved out of popularity and is decreasing due to its origin and connections to colonizer policies, such as the 1876 Indian Act or the Indian Residential Schools. While the term Indian is the legal identity of an Indigenous person in Canada and is still used in some tribes, Indigenous peoples today prefer to disregard Indian as a collective noun.

For the purpose of this report, we will be using the term “Indigenous” when referring to First Nations, Metis and Inuit students. This report will rely on using the term by United Nation’s Jose R. Martinez Cobo’s classification of what constitutes Indigeneity and who is Indigenous. The working definition is as follows:

Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing on those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal system (Keal, p.7, 2003).

¹ This term gained a significant amount of popularity since its use in the 1982 Canadian Constitution, but it is no longer the appropriate term used to define Indigenous peoples.

The term “Indigenous” is a term that provides a collective identity on a wide range of communities with very diverse histories, cultures, and traditions, based on the grounds that these peoples were already on the land or territory at a certain point in history. By recognizing and using the term Indigenous, in legal documents or in personal conversations, we are acknowledging their international legal rights, as set out in the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). The language and vocabulary we use when defining who is Indigenous is important to this discussion, and without clarifying the terminology, misunderstandings may arise. By simply referring to the first peoples as Indigenous at the University of Waterloo, we are taking a step forward in decolonizing the institution and accepting Indigenous ways of knowing on campus.

THE QUEST FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

As this is the Federation of Student’s first report and set of recommendations on Indigenous student engagement and education, it is important to begin with the history of Canada’s residential schools². By recognizing the history, we are acknowledging the role post-secondary institutions have played not just in our country’s colonial past but the role they continue to play in sustaining current institutional and Eurocentric colonial systems.

Following the 1876 Indian Act, the Federal government and various churches established Indian residential schools across the country. Nearly 150, 000 Indigenous students were forcibly removed from their homes and prohibited from speaking their languages, or practicing their cultural and spiritual traditions. Physical and sexual abuses in residential schools were common. Many students incurred various forms of punishment including strapping, being chained to benches, or being shackled to their beds. The survivors of the residential schools developed post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and many other forms of psychological disorders. Although they did not attend the residential schools themselves, Indigenous peoples today share the same struggles as their ancestors. The residential schools “laid the foundation for the epidemic we see today of domestic abuse and violence against Aboriginal women and children” (The Residential School System, 2013). Residential schools “were more than a component in the apparatus of social construction and control” (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, p.310, 2013). The schools “were part of the process of [Canadian] nation building and the concomitant marginalization of Aboriginal communities” (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, p.310, 2013).

² To understand the importance of incorporating Indigenous knowledge in post-secondary curriculum, non-Indigenous people must understand what residential schools are and how it continues to greatly impact survivors who attended and the generations that followed. Indigenous peoples today continue to be distrustful of educational institutions due to the long-lasting impacts. Commissioners of the TRC reported that many Canadians remain unaware of the history of the schools and that a “massive education campaign is needed” (The Globe and Mail, 2012). In order to understand the Trauma and intergenerational impacts facing indigenous peoples today, Canadians must know the historical traumas of residential schools, including physical and sexual abuses and being forbidden to speak your native language. While reconciliation may take generations, the legacy of Residential Schools must be recognized.

The impact on education and economic success for Indigenous peoples has been one of the longest lasting and most devastating legacies of the residential schools. A lack of access to higher education can lead to poverty, unemployment, underemployment, bad health, or even family or domestic violence. Our country's failure to fully facilitate educational opportunities for Indigenous people continues to present today. In acknowledging these truths, the Federation of Students seeks to address our obligation to 'decolonize education' at the University of Waterloo.



RECONCILIATION INITIATIVES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

The University of Waterloo is comprised of four main campuses and education centres in North America, Europe, and Asia and has over 30, 000 undergraduate students and 5, 600 graduate students. Known as a "research mecca," the University of Waterloo has been named the most innovative university in Canada by Maclean's for 26 consecutive years (Maclean's, 2017).

Institutional Analysis and Planning at the University of Waterloo gathered data regarding self-declared full-time undergraduate Indigenous students on campus from the years 2013 to 2017:

Academic Year	Students Per Term
2013-2014	119
2014-2015	118
2015-2016	135
2016-2017	159
Total Unique Count	253

These numbers do not include students that are Band-sponsored but did not self-declare as an Indigenous student, and the numbers only reflect studies registered as full-time. Arguably, the figures presented underestimate the number of Indigenous students attending the University, as many current Indigenous students on campus choose not to self-identity as Indigenous.

While the University of Waterloo did not participate in the institutionalization of residential schools, it remains the University's obligation to initiate engagement with the Indigenous community. As of August 2017, the following is a selected summary of reconciliation initiatives at the University of Waterloo.

WATERLOO ABORIGINAL EDUCATION CENTRE

To improve the services offered to Indigenous students on campus, the University hired a full-time coordinator for the Waterloo Aboriginal Education Centre (WAEC) in 2013. WAEC contains a multi-purpose room, a gathering space, a library, an office for one elder, several offices for staff members, and a kitchen. WAEC facilitates the sharing of Indigenous knowledge and provides cultural awareness and support to the University of Waterloo community, including Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, staff, and faculty, along with other Indigenous initiatives at the University. Every Thursday during the fall and winter terms, WAEC invites the University community to stop by the Centre to enjoy soup and bannock, and to learn about Indigenous culture and awareness on campus. Furthermore, weekly emails and newsletters are sent to Indigenous students inviting them to utilize local community services, and to attend cultural events and activities. The newsletters encourage students to make use of the University's support services on campus, such as housing, counselling services, upcoming bursaries and scholarships, job postings, and financial management.

WAEC has developed specific programs to address the obstacles facing Indigenous students on campus. Over the last few years, four programs concerning entrepreneurship and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) were created for Indigenous youth. These programs incorporate Indigenous knowledge and teachers to help facilitate the programs at St. Paul's University College.

The first program, Directions, has been going on for 10 years. The week-long camp occurs twice a year and provides an opportunity for students in grades 11 and 12 to become familiar with campus life by visiting the University's faculties, attending lectures, and taking part in science and technology-based workshops that focus on the traditional medicine wheel. The students also participate in traditional drums around the sacred fire.



Photo by Kristi Boulton

The second program focuses on entrepreneurship workshops for students in grades 11 and 12. The three-day long workshop is made possible with the collaboration of Indigenous entrepreneurs who speak to the youth and encourage them to strive to achieve highest potential. The workshop allows the youth to experience one-on-one encounters with Indigenous entrepreneurs, elders, and leaders within the community.

The third camp, IMPACT Girls Summer Camp, is made possible through a partnership of WAEC, the Engineering Science Quest and the HeForShe campaign. The camp is normally three days long for girls in grades seven and eight, who attend the camp with their caregiver. The camp aims to reduce the female student participation gap within STEM programs in post-secondary education. While WAEC no longer runs the program, the program is now being administered from the main University campus.

The last program, Circle of Life-Long Learning, is an interactive way for youth and their family members to participate in workshops and get to know the elders in the community. The program explores STEM in an Indigenous-based setting.

All of these programs are held on the main Waterloo campus. No previous knowledge of STEM or entrepreneurship is required in order to participate. It is meant for the youth to enjoy their camp experience and to allow them to become interested in post-secondary education. These camps continue to fulfill their purpose in closing the education gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

The 2014-2017 Strategic Mandate Agreement between the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and the University of Waterloo saw the University establish St. Paul's Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Indigenous Community program. The program will "teach 60 to 75 selected Indigenous high school learners a combination of entrepreneurial design thinking and problem-solving skills required to begin to tackle significant problems with a view to create a business or self-funding service concept" (Strategic Mandate Agreement, 2014).³

FEDERATION OF STUDENTS

The Aboriginal Student Association (ASA) is a Feds' sanctioned student club that hosts events for all undergraduate students concerning Indigenous issues and heritage. In 2016 Feds began laying the groundwork to facilitate the TRC recommendations on campus and in the Waterloo community by officially designating reconciliation as an advocacy priority. In 2017, Feds' executives commissioned the design and installation of a permanent land acknowledgement sign for the Student Life Centre, a building that has also played host to traditional Indigenous performers and, recently, Indigenous DJ/recording artist DJ Shub (A Tribe Called Red). The land acknowledgement plaque was unveiled on June 30, 2017 during National Aboriginal History Month and was accompanied by the release of an eight-point action plan specific to the University of Waterloo community. The unveiling ceremony welcomed members of the Waterloo community, including WAEC, ASA, staff and executive members of the University, and local politicians.

³ A detailed report of The 2014-2017 Strategic Mandate Agreement: University of Waterloo can be found here: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/2014-17-strategic-mandate-agreement-university-waterloo>



Antonio Brieva (Feds President), Raj Saini (MP, Kitchener Centre), Feridun Hamdullahpur (University of Waterloo President), Shelby Keedwell (ASA Co-President), Emma Smith (ASA Co-President), Dave Jaworsky (Mayor of Waterloo). Photo by Daniel Yang, from land acknowledgement plaque unveiling ceremony, June 30, 2017.

MOHAWK LANGUAGE COURSE

In August 2017, Renison University College, a fully affiliated University College of the University of Waterloo, began accepting enrollments into Waterloo's first Indigenous language course Introduction to Kanien'kéha (Mohawk Language). Building on Renison's tradition of offering a variety of language study options, the course was also seen as a response to TRC calls for increased courses in Indigenous languages. secret

NATIVE STUDIES PROGRAM

St. Paul's offers a series of Native Studies courses. While providing the opportunity for interdisciplinary study of the Indigenous peoples of Canada, some courses also focus on Indigenous cultures from other parts of the world. While this program is strictly course-based, with no current minor or major in place for undergraduate students, there is a list of discipline-based courses with Indigenous studies content.⁴

THE WATER INSTITUTE

The Water Institute is an interdisciplinary hub that facilitates research, education, and training, with a particular focus on sustainable use and management of water resources across the world. The Institute's researchers represent all six faculties, including 17 departments and schools, offering various perspectives on current water issues. As part of the 2016 WaterTalks series of public lectures, Merrell-Ann Phare, a lawyer and former Chief Negotiator on behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories, gave a presentation entitled *Water Co-Governance and Collaborative Consent: Working in Partnership with Indigenous Peoples to Protect Water and Honour the UNDRIP*.

THE WATERLOO INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION AND RESILIENCE

The Waterloo Institute for Social Innovation and Resilience (WISIR) pursues collaborative research and projects across University of Waterloo departments. In an effort to bridge the gap between Indigenous-based research, WISIR has conducted research to “explore trust, balance, respect, and understanding in intercultural relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada, with an overall aim of fostering, new responsible, reciprocal and respectful relationships in place of old conflicts” (Waterloo Institute for Social Innovation and Resilience, 2017).⁵ In addition, Anishanaabe maamwaye aki kiigayewin (AMAK) is a research project within WISIR that uses and “promotes traditional Indigenous knowledge and practices to foster decolonization and promote constructive intercultural relationships” (Waterloo Institute for Social Innovation and Resilience, 2017).⁶

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

An Indigenous Student Bursary is available to the Indigenous students at University of Waterloo. The bursary ranges in value from \$1,000 to \$3,500 for Indigenous students, both part-time and full-time, with financial needs. These students can be enrolled in any degree program in any year of study. For the purpose of this bursary, an Indigenous person is: “An Aboriginal person, as recognized in the Constitution Act, 1982 (status card or Métis registry where applicable); or a person who identifies with a First Nations, Indigenous, Métis, or Inuit cultural and/or ancestral background in Canada” (Student Awards and Financial Aid, 2017).⁷

The University offers the Metis Nation of Ontario Bursary valued at \$1,000 or more to full-time or part-time undergraduate Metis students⁸. Indigenous students enrolled full-time in third and fourth-year Faculties of Mathematics or Engineering are eligible for the IBM Upper-Year Award, valued at \$4,000. Indigenous students and women entering their second year of Chemical, Computer, Electrical, Environmental, Mechanical, or Software Engineering programs are eligible for the Ontario Power Generation Engineering Award, valued at \$2,400.⁹

⁵ More information on Indigenous innovation and Waterloo Institute for Social Innovation and Resilience can be found here: <https://uwaterloo.ca/waterloo-institute-for-social-innovation-and-resilience/research/indigenous-innovation>

⁶ More information on AMAK can be found here <https://uwaterloo.ca/waterloo-institute-for-social-innovation-and-resilience/research/indigenous-innovation>

⁷ A full description of the Indigenous Student Bursary can be found here: <https://uwaterloo.ca/student-awards-financial-aid/awards/indigenous-student-bursary>

⁸ More information regarding the Metis Nation of Ontario Bursary can be found here: <https://uwaterloo.ca/student-awards-financial-aid/awards/metis-nation-ontario-bursary>

⁹ Further information regarding the eligibility requirements for the IBM Upper-Year Award and the Ontario Power Generation Engineering Award can be found here: <https://uwaterloo.ca/student-awards-financial-aid/awards/ibm-upper-year-award> and <https://uwaterloo.ca/student-awards-financial-aid/awards/ontario-power-generation-engineering-award>

⁴ A list of cross-disciplinary courses can be found here: <http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/~rneedham/needhdata/nativstud.htm>

RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

Demonstrating a commitment to Indigeneity on campus and improving the relations with the current Indigenous student body, staff, and faculty are vital for the purposes of this report. To achieve the goals and proposals set out below, the University of Waterloo must recognize, in thought and in action, the educational barriers Indigenous students face, and recognize that Indigenous students bring diverse perspectives that will benefit the school. Students are at the core of this mission. It is expected that Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff, students, and faculty work together to accomplish these goals and maintain a positive and collaborative relationship.

Education is vital for reconciliation. Among the 94 calls to action, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission called upon educational institutions to engage with Indigenous communities to have successful reconciliation. By decolonizing Canadian universities by incorporating Indigenous knowledge, worldviews, and practices into curricula, we can better understand Indigenous cultures and allow for the process of healing and reconciliation to occur.

Universities across Canada have an imperative role to play in truth and reconciliation. As more Indigenous students become involved in post-secondary education, the University of Waterloo must work to ensure that Indigenous knowledge systems become a part of our institutional identity and a valued piece of the University's fabric.



Photo by Kristi Boulton

1. TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

University of Waterloo faculty, students, staff, members and representatives are encouraged to acknowledge the history of the traditional territory on which the University of Waterloo is located. This is a show of respect that honours the relationship between Indigenous peoples, their ancestors and the land.

Territorial acknowledgement of the Haldimand Tract, land promised to the Six Nations, should be stated at official ceremonies, including but not limited to Athletics events, Board of Governors meetings and generally all University of Waterloo events hosted by the Community Relations team (a central point of contact for the campus and community). Additionally, Students' Council and Board of Director's meetings, events and ceremonies hosted by the Federation of Students and affiliated student-run services, should endeavor to acknowledge the region's original inhabitants.

Furthermore, acknowledgements need not be strictly oral, and can come in the form of physical signage across key campus buildings, as well as websites and staff email signatures.

An example acknowledgement:

The University of Waterloo would like to acknowledge that we are on the traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishnaabeg, and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, land promised to the Six Nations, which includes six miles on each side of the Grand River.

Acknowledging the land is a form of reconciliation and respect for our Indigenous community whose ancestors have lived and walked on this very territory. This form of recognition is an essential element for establishing a mutually responsible and cooperative relationship for the future.

2. BUILD MORE INDIGENOUS SPACES

The University is encouraged to allow for more Indigenous spaces across all campuses. At the University of Waterloo St. Paul's University College is recognized as the main learning and working space for Indigenous culture on campus but Indigenous spaces should not be limited to this location. Moreover, we recommend that any current or future designs for campus expansion take Indigenous ceremonies, beliefs and histories into consideration.

While St. Paul's provides a sense of physical and often emotional connection to the land, further accessible spaces across campus for those who are differently abled and require the appropriate support, as well as for those in other far-away faculties such as engineering and math. Creating a comfortable environment and space for Indigenous students on the University of Waterloo campuses is important to their learning and overall academic experience. Increased Indigenous spaces will allow ceremonies, Pow Wows, and other celebrations to take place, and where Indigenous and non-Indigenous students can gather to support and learn from one another.

These spaces will also allow for non-Indigenous students to recognize and appreciate the different values and rights of Indigenous cultures. Indigenous spaces will allow for acknowledgement of Indigenous culture and practices, respect for Indigenous history, language, customs, and mutual sharing where all members of the University will be welcomed and encouraged to participate in the learning environment. These spaces will foster cross-cultural engagement and learning, and encourage interactions within the community, thus creating a positive cultural impact.

3. PROVIDE MORE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

It is recommended the University seek to continue building a financially supportive learning and work environment by increasing Indigenous student scholarships and financial assistance. For many of Indigenous descent, the legacy of colonization is realized in any number of comparative social disadvantages. Having access to more bursaries, scholarships and grants will only serve to increase the likelihood of Indigenous student success.

Indigenous students across Canadian post-secondary institutions are already at a disadvantage in post-secondary education. They continue to face barriers of equal opportunity in comparison to non-Indigenous students. In a report conducted by the Canadian Human Rights Commission, the "Equality Rights of Aboriginal People" found that Indigenous peoples, including university students, continue to experience disadvantages and difficulties compared to their non-Indigenous counterparts¹⁰. These include a greater likelihood of living in overcrowded housing that requires major repairs and a higher probability of having experienced physical, emotional, or sexual abuses and violence compared to their non-Indigenous counterparts. Furthermore, Indigenous students entering post-secondary schools are often older students, including women, single parents, or students with family or spousal responsibilities. Education has an influence on their overall well-being and it is a key determinant of their health. A lack of post-secondary institutional funding has placed prospective and current Indigenous students at a further disadvantage.

To date, the University of Waterloo has four bursaries specifically available to Indigenous students totaling just over \$10,000 in comparison to the University of British Columbia which offers nearly \$100,000 in entrance scholarships for Indigenous students. Notably, Wilfrid Laurier University offers over 10 bursaries, scholarships and grants to its undergraduate student population¹¹. A review of the University of Waterloo financial resources allocated for this purpose should be conducted to assess if the bursaries provided meet the needs of Waterloo's Indigenous students. Recently, the Federation of Students successfully lobbied the Federal government to provide Indigenous-centric funding via the Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP), yet it is further recommended that Feds continue to engage government for increased concessions¹².

Many universities across Canada have emergency funding in place for their Indigenous students. For example, the University of Victoria, the Kwantlen Polytechnic University, the University of Western Ontario, and Capilano University all have emergency bursaries and scholarships in place specifically for their Indigenous students. The emergency bursaries are non-repayable financial assistance for the students who demonstrate an unforeseen and sudden financial emergency, and where all other sources of income have been exhausted. While many of these bursaries are case-specific, the financial assistance is provided as quickly as possible in response to the student's situation.

To date, the University of Waterloo has no such bursary in place for its Indigenous students. Rather, there is an emergency loan to assist any students enrolled to cover the costs related to their education, such as rent or groceries or emergency funding while waiting for another source of income; however, these loans may not be used to cover tuition. While the loan is provided interest free for a stipulated period of time (loans must be paid by the end of the term in which it is given), an additional late fee of \$25.00 will be added to the loan if the student fails to notify the appropriate office. The normal loan maximum is \$500 to \$1,000 for full-time undergraduate students and \$300 for part-time undergraduate students. Loans provided are short-term only: 30, 60, or 90 days.

The percentage of Indigenous students with a post-secondary education degree is lower when compared to their non-Indigenous counterparts. In a report entitled "Opening the Door: Reducing Barriers to Post-Secondary Education in Canada" the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology stated that "post-secondary education has a positive effect on Canadians' socio-economic status" and generally, "an individual's employability and salary increase in relation to their education level" (Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, p.43, 2011). The report further alluded to the fact that post-secondary education could "improve the situation of Aboriginal people, who have higher poverty and unemployment rates than the overall Canadian population" (Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, p.43, 2011). Indigenous peoples with a post-secondary degree have employment rates closer to those of non-Indigenous peoples. Given that they are the fastest growing population in Canada, improving access to post-secondary education by providing financial assistance to prospective and current Indigenous students can benefit Canada as a whole (Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, p.44, 2011). Having access to more bursaries, scholarships and grants will only serve to increase the likelihood of Indigenous student success.

¹⁰ The full report on the equality rights of Indigenous peoples can be found here: http://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/sites/default/files/equality_aboriginal_report.pdf

¹¹ The dollar amounts for Wilfrid Laurier University bursaries, awards and scholarships are not made available to the public.

¹² According to the Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada website, the Post-Secondary Student Support Program aims to provide financial assistance to Indigenous students enrolled in post-secondary education programs. The program is only available to Treaty/Status First Nation and Inuit students living in Canada. Funding for this program has been capped at 2% since 1996, which evidently ignores the increasing tuition costs.

Given that they are the fastest growing population in Canada, improving access to post-secondary education by providing financial assistance to prospective and current Indigenous students can benefit Canada as a whole (Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, p.44, 2011).

4. ENSURE DATA REPRESENTATION

The University is encouraged to increasingly facilitate the acquisition and inclusion of Indigenous student data in any assessment of student success at Waterloo. Moreover, it is essential that the Federation of Students, in fulfilling our mandate, continually seek to demand and scrutinize this data. Only with comprehensive statistics can the University community gain vital insight on how to best provide support and services for the incoming and current Indigenous students.

Currently, the University of Waterloo does not have data on the number of part-time, self-declared Indigenous faculty members, staff and students across the campuses. The lack of comprehensive data on Indigenous students, including funding, dropout or withdrawal, enrolment, and retention rates largely emerges from a lack of consistent data collection methods.

5. OFFER MORE INDIGENOUS CURRICULUM

The University of Waterloo is encouraged to expand its curricula offerings to include more courses based on Indigenous history, language, knowledge and protocols, including, but not limited to, the establishment of a Native studies minor or major being made available to all students.

Incorporating Indigenous knowledge and traditions into University's spaces and curricula will allow for an increase in Indigenous faculty to teach these courses, while also allowing Indigenous cultures and languages to become more visible on campus. These educational opportunities should also be provided for academic staff and faculty members to ensure that they can incorporate Indigenous knowledge in their areas. Further, the Federation of Students should seek to continually assess University curricula through the rubric of Indigenous advocacy and the TRC calls to action.

The tenth call to action from the TRC asks Canadians to commit to closing Indigenous educational achievement gaps within one generation by developing culturally appropriate curricula. While the University has designated NATST as the course code for Native Studies, enrollment options currently stand at one - NATST 272/370 (Issues in Contemporary Native Communities in Canada). Notably,

in 2016, NATST 370 saw a 400 per cent increase in student enrolment¹³. This interest in Indigenous culture and communities has continued to spark the interest of non-Indigenous students across campus. Yet, the inability to combine this and related courses from other disciplines with Indigenous content into a minor or diploma can serve as a disincentive to enrollment. Departments across the University that currently have Indigenous content include: Anthropology, English, and Sociology to name a few.¹⁴

It is therefore proposed that the University of Waterloo combine these courses so students are able to recognized certification in Native Studies. The pre-existing Indigenous-based courses should be renewed and reinvigorated and become a part of a community effort. Teaching the new generation about Indigenous history is one of the calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and allowing students to minor in it will also allow them to expand their knowledge on Indigenous history, experience and culture.

Concerning the current state of Indigenous course material at the University of Waterloo, the following provides a roadmap of key faculties and programs:

A) Department of Social Development Studies

Social Development Studies (SDS) is a “Bachelor of Arts major offering courses in human and social development, including psychology, sociology, and social work. Students develop skills in critical thinking, problem solving, interpersonal relations, leadership, civic engagement, and global citizenship” (Social Development Studies, 2017). With a University of Waterloo degree and an SDS major, graduates go in to fields of professional programs and careers in human and public service.

The four specializations offered in SDS are: Cultural Diversity, Education, Individual Well-Being and Development, Social Policy and Social Action, Social Work.

Again, it is important to reiterate that there currently exists no Indigenous major, minor or specialization. As the urban Indigenous population increases, the gaps of services for rural Indigenous populations also increases, and there is a strong need for social workers to understand their Indigenous clients and communities. Specializing in social work based in Indigenous knowledge is a key component of the University's role in reconciliation and its commitment to the importance its places on its connections with Indigenous students.

By implementing Indigenous knowledge in SDS, students, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, can explore Indigenous ways of healing, values, and practices that are unique to the circumstances of Indigenous clients. This will also allow students to recognize and acknowledge Indigenous understandings of practices and helping as applicable to social work. For the faculty of Social Development Studies, programs need to be developed that are directly relevant to Indigenous peoples and perspectives.

¹³ Further information about enrolment in Indigenous studies course can be found here: <https://uwaterloo.ca/stpauls/news/enrolment-aboriginal-studies-course-jumps-more-400-percent>

¹⁴ More information about the Native Studies program at the University of Waterloo can be found here <http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/~rneedham/needhdata/nativstud.htm>

B) Department of Legal Studies

Legal Studies (LS) is “the study of law, which is central to everything we do - how we carry on business, how we treat the environment, how we shape our governments and how we deal with other people” (Legal Studies, 2017). Legal Studies helps us “understand the origins and impact of legal systems from the viewpoint of political science, history, sociology, philosophy, and peace and conflict studies” (Legal Studies, 2017).

Currently, there are only three undergraduate Indigenous law courses offered at the University. Restorative Justice (LS 344), Public Policy and Native Peoples in Canada (LS 373), and Government and Politics of Indigenous Peoples (LS 462).

LS 344: Restorative Justice

This is a seminar course investigating the history, theory, principles, practices and people of restorative justice. Content will center on restorative justice as a way of dealing with interpersonal conflict and violence in the Canadian context. Although the roots of restorative justice practice go back thousands of years in many aboriginal and indigenous communities, it is only since the mid-1970's that it began to formally (re)emerge in Canada.

LS 373: Public Policy and Native Peoples in Canada

This course examines the evolution, logic, processes, and impacts of government policies developed specifically for Native peoples, with particular attention to government policy as both a cause of and a response to social problems within Native communities

LS 462: Government and Politics of Indigenous Peoples

Government and Politics of Indigenous Peoples introduces the history and development of government policy and regulations that have altered the political and social structures of Indigenous societies. It explores contemporary challenges to government policy and regulations, as reflected in the struggles for land, Indigenous rights, and self-government, as well as the development of a global identity.

All students who choose to major or minor in Legal studies should be required to take courses on Indigenous peoples and the law, which should include the treaties and Indigenous rights, Indigenous governance and self-determination, and Indigenous-Crown relations.

C) Department of Political Science

The faculty of Political Science (PSCI) explores “political power, global politics and governance, citizens and their relationship to governments, and political theory” (Political Science, 2017). Students may choose to specialize in Politics and Business, Global Governance, International Relations, or Canadian Politics, which is currently in the process of being implemented as a fourth specialization.

To date, there is only one undergraduate political science course that focuses on Indigenous politics and the government:

PSCI 462 Government and Politics of Indigenous Peoples

This offers an introduction to the history and development of government policy and regulations that have altered the political and social structures of Indigenous societies. It explores contemporary challenges to government policy and regulations, as reflected in the struggles for land, Indigenous rights, and self-government, as well as the development of a global identity.

Understanding Indigenous politics and history is essential in the study of Political Science in Canada, especially where there is a constant attempt to link modern and traditional forms of governance. A misunderstanding of Indigenous governance perpetuates colonialism, and it is imperative that Indigenous politics is being incorporated in this discipline.



Photo by Kristi Boulton

D) Department of History

This discipline emphasizes 20th century history, the history of women and minority groups, public policy, and the military. As per the University of Waterloo's History undergraduate website, "without a sense of history, we cannot understand where our world has come from nor can we understand where it might be going, and with the rapid pace at which the world is changing, it is even more important that we have a good sense of how we got to where we are" (History, 2017).

HIST 269 Aboriginal History of Canada

Aboriginal History of Canada examines the history of Indigenous peoples within Canada from before contact to the present. It emphasizes the relationship between Indigenous peoples (First Nations, Inuit, Métis) and settler society, forms of Indigenous resistance and assertions of rights, the diverse nature of communities and cultures, and the relationship between local and national histories.

HIST 271 Global Indigenous Issues

Global Indigenous Issues examines the histories of indigenous peoples from around the world, covering areas such as educational assimilation, the internationalization of indigenous rights, lands and resource development conflicts, indigenous-state relations, language and cultural revitalization, and international political activism. The course examines local indigenous histories and places these experiences into the larger global context.

It should be the position of the University community that the history of the Indigenous peoples in Canada is the very history of Canada. By offering more than two courses on Indigenous and Indigenous Canadian history, this department can assist in the historic healing process.



Photo by Daniel Yang

E) Other Faculties and Departments

In many regards, all academic departments at the University of Waterloo can play an important role in reconciliation. The department of Economics, for example, could seek to offer courses on Indigenous economics that highlight and investigate issues relating to Indigenous self-governance and urban and regional economic development (as seen at Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops, British Columbia). Likewise, business related courses could explore pedagogy related to Indigenous business and leadership, contemporary business issues and Indigenous traditional protocols, and the role that knowledge plays in Indigenous decision making (as seen at Simon Fraser University's Beedie School of Business in Vancouver, British Columbia).

The faculty of Environment currently offers two courses specific to Indigenous peoples: Aboriginal Law and Natural Resource Development (ENVS 401) and First Peoples and Business Development (ENVS 400). Given their globally renowned expertise, the department could also seek to offer an academic stream focused on clean water initiatives in Indigenous communities. Trent University in Peterborough, Ontario, is a prime example: they provide a program in Indigenous Environmental Science that is based on developing integrative thinking to "address environmental, health and social issues" that benefit Indigenous communities (Indigenous Environmental Science, 2017).

F) Staff Training

The University of Waterloo should provide education on Indigenous issues not only to students but to all faculty and staff so they are made aware of the histories and ongoing current struggles Indigenous peoples in Canada are facing within post-secondary education and in their overall ways of life. These cultural awareness courses and training must respectfully introduce staff and faculty to Indigenous traditions and ways of learning, with a particular focus on the relationship of Indigenous peoples to the University. The courses should contain key guidelines around Indigenous-focused content to appropriately utilize Indigenous pedagogies. The training is necessary for non-Indigenous staff and faculty so they are comfortable promoting and engaging in dialogue between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. To make this a success, current Indigenous staff, faculty, and students, along with the local Indigenous communities must be involved in the creation of this module.

In the Western Hemisphere, it is all but inevitable that pedagogies reflect a certain Eurocentrism. To overcome this challenge, the University must begin to consider and respect diverse ways of learning and seek to normalize Indigenous knowledge. Traditional knowledge benefits non-Indigenous students as well, and by recognizing and implementing Indigenous knowledge it also affirms Indigenous identity while maintaining cultural diversity.

6. HIRE MORE INDIGENOUS FACULTY

Universities have an important role to play in promoting knowledge systems. However, an institute of higher learning cannot holistically offer an innovative Indigenous curriculum without the participation of qualified Indigenous faculty. By incorporating Indigenous pedagogy into our curriculum, the University will arguably catalyze greater opportunities to hire expert staff of Indigenous descent. We encourage the University to embrace the principle that Indigenous knowledge and content should be included in all degree programs, as the University of Saskatchewan has done. For example, the University of Saskatchewan has the Kanawayihetaytan Askiy (Cree for “let us take care of the land”) certificate that is “focused on examining environmental, legal and economic aspects of land and resource management in Indigenous communities” (University of Saskatchewan, 2016). In 2016, two diploma options became available to further students’ understanding of Indigenous governance and land management. These diplomas were made possible because they were developed in consultation with Indigenous communities near the University of Saskatchewan.

The University of Waterloo is encouraged to help ensure that Indigenous and non-Indigenous students are exposed to learning systems which foster positive opportunities for Indigenous professionals and Indigenous communities. Facilitating higher education that includes Indigenous paradigms and pedagogies across all disciplines is an essential move towards reconciliation.

7. RECRUIT MORE INDIGENOUS STUDENTS

While Canada’s Indigenous population is the fastest growing segment of our society, Indigenous students are half as likely to finish a secondary education and are one-fifth as likely to complete a post-secondary degree (Widdowson & Howard, p.248, 2013). We encourage the University to continue working with partners such as St. Paul’s University College to on how to improve the admission rates of Indigenous students coming to the school.

Indigenous student entrance and transition to the University of Waterloo could be greatly facilitated by bridge, transition and orientation programs. Such program will not only assist the students with the knowledge of the support services but will assist them to overcome the profound disadvantages associated with Canada’s colonial past. There continues to exist an achievement gap between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous educational achievement (view Appendix A for a full list of the highest level of educational attainment amongst Indigenous peoples aged 25 to 64) – not least of which are the increasing drop-out rates amongst Indigenous students, Canada-wide. While the demographic forecast for Canada signals a rapidly increasing Indigenous population, with the assistance of targeted recruiting of Indigenous students, post-secondary enrollment rates can also increase.¹⁵

¹⁵ Indigenous youth have higher post-secondary school dropout rates than non-Indigenous youth and they are twice as likely to decline their post-secondary education offers of acceptance than non-Indigenous peoples. However, the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada estimates that there are nearly 20,000-25,000 Indigenous students in universities across Canada, and the number of Indigenous students “has been growing at the same rate as overall student numbers over much of the last decade” (Universities Canada, p.19, 2011).

Universities Canada goes on to state:

Higher education offers great potential for reconciliation and a renewed relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada. Universities benefit from the presence of Indigenous students and their cultures, making our campuses more open places with wider sources of discovery and knowledge. Mutual respect for different ways of knowing and recognizing the intellectual contributions of Indigenous people is essential to building trust, understanding, and sharing. The cohabitation of Western science and Indigenous knowledge on campuses has the power of opening a dialogue among cultures and enhancing our shared knowledge (Universities Canada, 2015).

Universities Canada notes that Indigenous peoples are the fastest growing segment of the Canadian population and post-secondary enrolment rates have increased exponentially in recent years. Compared to the 26.5% of non-Indigenous population who have post-secondary degrees, only 9.8% of Indigenous peoples have a university degree in Canada (view Appendix B for data between Indigenous and non-Indigenous university attainment rates from 1981 to 2006). Furthermore, Indigenous youth who complete high school are twice as likely to be employed and those who have university degrees triple their earning potential¹⁶. If Indigenous students’ graduation rates were equal to that of non-Indigenous students, this could potentially inject an additional \$71 billion into the Canadian economy over the next decade. The will to achieve these milestones is present within Indigenous communities, but it also takes sustainable investment and support from post-secondary institutions.

Universities across Canada must increase access to education to Indigenous students. It is noted that with a university degree, “Indigenous people in Canada can earn 60% more than their peers with a high school diploma, and they experience longer and greater participation in the workforce” (Universities Canada, 2015). An innovative recruitment strategy can provide Indigenous students with the academic assistance they need to help with the transition to higher education and to the workforce.

¹⁶ Universities Canada states that with higher levels of education amongst Indigenous peoples, employment rates also increase significantly. A 2006 Census revealed that “only about 45 percent of Aboriginal Canadians between 25 and 64 who have not completed secondary school are employed. Employment levels rise to 67 percent for high school graduates, 75 percent for college graduates and 84 percent for bachelor’s graduates” (Universities Canada, p.21, 2011).

8. FACILITATE MORE INDIGENOUS RESEARCH

The University is encouraged to increasingly recognize the growing expectation for emerging research interests on Indigenous issues, across various disciplines. The University of Waterloo currently has 39 research centres and institutes, and while none are specific to Indigenous topics, the opportunity exists for directed interdisciplinary research. The truth found in research is essential to reconciliation. Recognizing Waterloo’s role as a thought leader on the national stage, it stands to reason that an increased involvement in researching Indigenous issues at University of Waterloo has the potential to have profound results across Canada.

CONCLUSION

Approximately 70,000 Indian Residential School survivor students filed class-action lawsuits against the Federal government and church entities. It is therefore perhaps unsurprising that of the 94 TRC calls to action, educational institutions figure so prominently as a means of reconciliation. Lori Campbell, director of the Waterloo Aboriginal Educational Centre, states that these recommendations “will better prepare non-Indigenous students to work alongside Indigenous students. Indigenizing the academy is something that needs to be done whether or not the Indigenous student is in the room – it is fundamental that it is prioritized.”

The TRC provided a rare opportunity for non-Indigenous people in Canada to critically reflect on history and themselves. As an institution renowned for its leadership in knowledge and innovation, the University of Waterloo should be at the forefront of this positive change by embracing Indigenous culture, knowledge and ways of learning into our institution’s governance and pedagogical infrastructures.



Photo by Daniel Yang

APPENDIX A

Statistics Canada compiled a data set concerning post-secondary educational attainment levels amongst Indigenous peoples aged 25 to 64 in Ontario in 2011. In 2011, it was recorded that only 52 percent of Indigenous peoples in this age category had a degree or diploma from a post-secondary school within Ontario, compared to 65% of their non-Indigenous counterparts.

High level of educational attainment of population aged 25 to 64, Ontario 2011¹⁷

	Total Aboriginal Identity Population	Non-Aboriginal Identity Population
No certificate, diploma, or degree	23.5	10.7
High school diploma or equivalent	24.3	24.2
Postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree	52.3	65.1
Apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma	11.6	7.7
College, CEGEP or other non-university certificate or diploma	26.5	23.5
University certificate or diploma below bachelor level	2.9	4.6
University certificate at bachelor level or above	11.3	29.3

APPENDIX B

A 2011 report published by Universities Canada demonstrates the growing rates in post-secondary education attainment amongst Indigenous peoples, aged 25 to 64, from 1981 to 2006. The 25-year period reveals the increasing percentage of university degrees.¹⁸

Proportion of the population with a university degree

Year	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous
1981	2%	8.1%
1991	2.6%	11.6%
1996	4.2%	15.5%
2001	5.9%	20.1%
2006	7.7%	23.4%

¹⁸ A full report on Indigenous students can be found on Universities Canada report entitled Trends in Higher Education, beginning on page 19: <https://www.univcan.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/trends-vol1-enrolment-june-2011.pdf>

¹⁷ For the purposes of this report, the table was condensed and only includes Indigenous and non-Indigenous educational attainment in post-secondary school. A full and detailed table can be found at Statistics Canada website <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-656-x/89-656-x2016007-eng.htm>

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“**EDUCATION, OR WHAT
PASSED FOR IT, GOT US
INTO THIS SITUATION,**

**AND EDUCATION IS WHAT
WILL LEAD US OUT.**”

(Murray Sinclair, Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission)



***To serve, empower and represent the undergraduate students
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