

ohpahotân | oohpaahotaan: The Gift
PHASE 4 REPORT:
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCE

"anohc kîpasikônew / we rise / niipawî." 2020-21. Artists: Vanessa Hyggen, Sandy Bonny, Lyndon Tootoosis.



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As we enter Phase 4 of *ohpahotân* | *oohpaahotaan*, the College of Arts and Science is reflecting upon its responsibilities as an academic community on Indigenous land. We are considering how our structures, practices, and relationships align with the seven commitments of the Indigenous Strategy. This report allows us to document our progress, assess how well these commitments are reflected in our teaching, research, and community work, and identify where further change is needed.

The College of Arts and Science is large, complex, and diverse. No single perspective can fully represent the work happening across our community. This report offers a high-level overview, bringing together submissions from our 18 departments and one school.

Faculty and staff across the college put significant time and thought into this work. I especially want to recognize our department and school heads for leading the effort to gather and organize information from their units.

This report highlights common themes, trends, and selected examples of progress. It is not possible to include every initiative from the past five years, but each contribution has helped shape this summary.

I am also grateful for the honesty shown by contributors who spoke openly about where progress has been limited. Many reflected on missed opportunities, ongoing barriers, and areas where more could have been done.

At the same time, there is a shared commitment to learn and improve. Where progress has been slower than hoped, there is determination to move forward. This mindset will guide us as we continue working toward the seven commitments and meaningful, lasting change.

We have also seen important progress across many areas. Both large and small efforts have contributed to advancing decolonization, reconciliation, and Indigenization. I am grateful for the persistence, creativity, and care shown by faculty, staff, and students. Our progress reflects the collective work of our community.

Respectfully,



Microsoft Copilot, a generative AI tool, was used to assist with drafting some of the summaries in this report.

Reflections and Overview

The five years since the gifting of the Indigenous Strategy in August 2021 have been the latest steps of an ongoing journey in the College of Arts and Science's understanding and integration of Indigenous knowledge, perspectives, and relationships.

While their role has not always been recognized, Indigenous peoples have been integral to the College of Arts and Science since our founding more than a century ago. Here we outline some of the significant milestones in our college's history:

- **1915:** Annie Maude "Nan" McKay became the **first Métis student and Indigenous woman to graduate** from USask, earning a Bachelor of Arts from the College of Arts and Science.
- **1982:** The **Native Studies Program** was established and quickly became an independent department in 1983, institutionalizing Indigenous scholarship at USask. Indigenous-focused courses expanded significantly; today, classes such as INDG 107 reach roughly 2,000 students each year.
- **2011:** The role of **Assistant Dean of Aboriginal Affairs** was created to support Indigenous initiatives within the college. In 2017, the role evolved into the **Vice-Dean Indigenous**, reflecting changing language and a growing scope and importance of Indigenous leadership.
- **2012:** The **Aboriginal Student Achievement Program (ASAP)** was launched, introducing holistic academic and cultural supports to improve Indigenous student success. It would later be renamed **Indigenous Student Achievement Pathways (ISAP)**.
- **2014:** The Aboriginal Student Achievement and Transition Program Office was renamed the **Trish Monture Centre for Student Success**, honouring a prominent Indigenous scholar and strengthening student support structures.
- **2018:** An **Indigenous faculty hiring strategy** was introduced, allocating dedicated positions to Indigenous scholars to increase representation and influence within the college.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND TRANSFORMATIONS

Later sections in this report will describe in more detail how the College of Arts and Science has worked to embed its *ohpahotân* | *oohpaahotaan* fundamental commitments across teaching, research, governance, and community engagement.

The changes include a movement away from additive or symbolic inclusion of Indigenous knowledge toward more structural and systemic approaches. Initiatives such as the Indigenous Learning Requirement, expanded land-based learning opportunities, and community-engaged research partnerships illustrate our commitment to embedding Indigenous ways of knowing into the core of curriculum and pedagogy.

We also saw progress in language shifts and cultural transformation. Units across the college have adopted more thoughtful and intentional practices, including the integration of land acknowledgements into courses and events, the normalization of Indigenous languages in research and teaching, and the increased presence of storytelling as a legitimate and valued scholarly method.



At the policy and institutional level, we have seen evidence of meaningful evolution. Revisions to tenure, promotion, and renewal standards to recognize community-engaged and Indigenous-focused work represent an important step toward aligning institutional structures with Indigenous values of relationality, reciprocity, and accountability. Similarly, the development of partnerships such as our *Asota* agreement with Mistawasis Nêhiyawak demonstrated a shift toward long-term, reciprocal collaboration grounded in shared priorities and respect.

The college has also seen growth in initiatives focused on Indigenous student success, improved access, and community-building, particularly through established pillars such as ISAP, the Trish Monture Centre, Kamskénaw and the Science Ambassador Program. These initiatives reflect a holistic approach to the student experience, supporting not only academic achievement but also belonging, identity, and wellbeing.

Collectively, these efforts represent a shift in institutional culture. While gaps remain, there is increasing evidence that Indigenous principles, protocols, and relationships are influencing how the college understands teaching, research, and engagement.

CONTINUING CHALLENGES

While the College of Arts and Science has made meaningful progress, this report also acknowledges the ways our transformation remains ongoing. Engagement with *ohpahotân* | *oohpaahotaan* varies significantly across units, with some demonstrating deep integration of Indigenous knowledge and relationships, while others rely on individual champions rather than sustained, structural approaches. This unevenness limits the extent of systemic change and makes progress difficult to maintain.

In a college as large as ours, even the physical spaces available for teaching and engagement vary greatly across campus, in some cases limiting the flexible, collaborative approaches our faculty and staff wish to implement. As one department observed, “Many educational techniques are a poor fit for classrooms with students all facing forward in chairs bolted to the floor.”

The continued underrepresentation of Indigenous faculty, staff, and students remains a significant challenge. Indigenous voices are often concentrated in specific areas, placing additional responsibility on a small number of individuals and limiting broader institutional capacity to embody the principle of “nothing about us without us.”

The vacancy since 2023 of the college’s Vice-Dean Indigenous role has been a concern across the college. Filling the position and retaining candidates has proven challenging going back to 2018. After an 18-month search, Dr. Angela Jaime was appointed as Vice-Dean Indigenous in 2020, and made important contributions in the role for one year before being seconded as USask’s Vice-Provost Indigenous Engagement (VPIE). After that move, the Vice-Dean Indigenous portfolio in the college was filled with various short-term, acting appointments, the last one ending in June 2023. Recent consultation on the role with college department heads/director has identified a need to update and revise the Vice-Dean Indigenous profile given this has not happened since 2018. Importantly, the existing role is so outdated that it does not speak to *ohpahotân* | *oohpaahotaan* among other key institutional policies, including the Indigenous Truth Policy on Indigenous citizenship/membership - *deybwewin* | *taapwaywin* | *tapwewin*. Conversations are continuing with the college community on the Vice-Dean Indigenous role with the aim of ensuring its duties and mandate are current and clear on supporting the needs of the college and outlining how it will work in concert with institutional strategies and initiatives set forward by the Office of the VPIE.



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College of Arts and Science

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Some ambitious, well-intentioned goals set by the college shortly before the gifting of the Indigenous Strategy have not come to fruition. The 2018 recruitment strategy that aimed to hire 30 new Indigenous faculty members in 10 years was slowed by the reality of an extremely competitive environment to recruit and retain Indigenous scholars among Canadian universities. The proposed Centre for Indigenous Scholarship never reached a fully formed plan as logistical challenges emerged and key champions for the project moved on. The commitments to better representation and knowledge stewardship that inspired these projects remain in place, but they are being realized in different forms.

Our college's successes and challenges over the past five years signal a transformation still underway. As we look to the work that remains, we reaffirm the responsibility of the college to continue moving forward with honesty, humility, collaboration, and commitment.



Progress on the Seven Commitments

Safety – Creating safe spaces for Indigenous peoples to thrive

Academic units across the College of Arts and Science have reported a deliberate shift toward confronting colonial legacies and creating more inclusive work and learning environments. This is reflected in efforts to embed decolonial perspectives in courses, shift the language used in documents and events, foster anti-racist and inclusive pedagogies, and engage ethically with Indigenous partners. There has been widespread voluntary participation by staff and faculty in anti-oppression and anti-racism training. In some departments, work has extended to research and institutional practices, including community collaboration, repatriation, and the adaptation of teaching methods to support diverse ways of learning. At the same time, many of our academic units note gaps. Instructors who deliver Indigenous Learning Requirement courses often struggle due to the weight of the course topics and negativity they encounter from some students who are resentful they must complete the requirement. Additionally, uneven implementation of safety initiatives, limited Indigenous faculty representation, and reliance on individual efforts without sustained structural and/or resource support suggest that progress remains partial and contingent.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The college partnered with the City of Saskatoon [to offer two workshops in 2026 titled “Ethical Spaces in Treaty Places.”](#) Nearly 90 people—USask faculty, staff and students, and City of Saskatoon employees—attended to learn about creating safe, ethical co-learning spaces from Elder Willie Ermine.
- A series of educational events titled Dimensions in Diversity was launched by the Vice-Deans Indigenous and Faculty Relations in late 2020. Faculty and staff were invited to join conversations and build understanding on topics of diversity, inclusion and equity, as well as Indigenization.
- The college’s EDI Initiatives Fund contributed funding to several events and initiatives aimed at combating bias and supporting Indigenous student success. These included an “Examining Bias Workshop” hosted by ISAP; an “Academic Community Building Initiative for Indigenous Students” in the Undergraduate Student Office; and a Department of Political Studies workshop on understanding Indigenous worldviews and building reciprocal relationships.
- The Department of Anthropology embarked on new repatriation and collections care initiatives, notably the [return of a birchbark canoe to the Lac La Ronge Indian Band](#) and ethnographic materials to the Q’eqchi’ Maya in Belize. The department is also working to address legacy collections held by the university by notifying affiliated Indigenous communities, consulting with Elders and Indigenous offices, and involving Indigenous students in research and documentation roles.
- The Department of Physics and Engineering Physics redesigned its courses to create more inclusive and participatory learning environments. Experiments in labs were changed from a “recipe book”-style list of steps to collaborative experiment designs that enable multiple perspectives and respectful knowledge sharing. Instead of submitting lab reports, students contribute to conversations about the results of each experiment, uplifting and promoting diverse ways of knowing, and building relationships through understanding.
- In recent years, many units incorporated land acknowledgements into all course syllabi, meetings, and events. The Department of Geography and Planning created a standing agenda item at its meetings for faculty members to share ways they have expanded their Indigenous knowledge or applied it to their work. In the Department of Political Studies, events now begin with personalized land



acknowledgements given by students. Two College of Arts and Science faculty members—Dr. Brad Congdon in the Department of English and Dr. Simonne Horwitz in the Department of History—are part of [USask's 2024-26 EDI Faculty Fellowship cohort](#) focusing on equity, diversity and inclusion, Indigenization, and open educational practices.

- o School for the Arts faculty member Dr. Mary Longman created [Passage Home, a major public artwork in Prince Albert honouring Indigenous children](#) who died in residential schools, day schools, foster care, and the Sixties Scoop. Longman's goal was to create a piece about hope and change for the next generation, as well as a place of healing for survivors and families.
- o Longman and Department of Indigenous Studies faculty member Dr. Winona Wheeler were part of the [USask task force that developed the deybewin | taapwaywin | tapwewin: Indigenous Truth policy](#).

Wellness – Supporting holistic health and wellbeing

College of Arts and Science units have reported growing awareness of the need to develop and integrate wellness supports into teaching, research, outreach and mentorship. Indigenous Student Achievement Pathways (ISAP) remains a signature support program for Indigenous students within our college, offering peer mentorship, social connection and culturally responsive instructors. Department and school initiatives have focused on fostering belonging and supporting student confidence through expanded participation in ISAP, through mentorship and advising practices, and through curricula that introduce holistic models of health and wellbeing. Some academic units have connected wellness to community-engaged research and service delivery, where partnerships with Indigenous organizations and the development of accessible, community-oriented resources are used to support both student learning and community priorities. Ongoing challenges remain, including limited capacity to meet student mental health and academic support needs, and uneven access to appropriate group and community spaces.

HIGHLIGHTS

- o [ISAP celebrated its 10-year anniversary in 2022](#). Fifteen College of Arts and Science departments contribute to supporting ISAP, which achieved 205 student registrations in 2025/26.
- o Clinical psychologists and students in the Graduate Program in Clinical Psychology provide mental health services to the public. As part of [an ongoing expansion of the program](#), clinical staff in the Department of Psychology and Health Studies are actively building partnerships to provide clinical services in Northern Saskatchewan Indigenous communities. An evolving partnership is in place with Meadow Lake Tribal Council and more partnerships are under discussion. Indigenous cultural perspectives and healing methods are foundational to learning within the program.
- o Faculty in the Department of Anthropology conduct community-engaged research on Indigenous health and wellbeing. These projects have supported wellness by producing accessible materials—including reports, summaries, teaching resources, activity books, digital archives, and community publications—designed to be useful to partners rather than solely to academic audiences.
- o In 2023, Acting Vice-Dean Indigenous Priscilla Settee hosted a mentorship session for new faculty on the topic of Indigenizing research and teaching.



Stewardship – Honouring responsibilities to land, people, and knowledge

Work to preserve and amplify Indigenous cultures, languages and protocols is reflected in a range of curricular, research and partnership initiatives in the College of Arts and Science during the past five years. Almost universally, our departments endeavoured to expand the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge, perspectives and methodologies in academic courses and programs. We acknowledge that these efforts have sometimes fallen short in the past, rightly earning criticism for a lack of adequate consultation or for superficial representation.

Learning from these experiences, many of our units have made a concerted effort to embed Indigenous content across entire programs rather than locating it in specific electives, and to conduct meaningful consultation. Indigenous knowledge keepers and subject matter experts are commonly consulted in course development, and in some cases directly participate in teaching as guest speakers or contributors of classroom content. Indigenous learning is now a requirement for all College of Arts and Science degrees, and several units have moved to add additional Indigenous learning courses as program requirements.

We saw the creation of several new land-based learning opportunities, co-developed courses with Indigenous partners, and research projects grounded in long-term relationships and reciprocity. In ways too numerous to list, our faculty have advanced stewardship through creative practice, language revitalization efforts, and the integration of Indigenous knowledge into artistic, scientific, and interdisciplinary work.

HIGHLIGHTS

- o The college's Indigenous Learning Requirement was fully implemented in 2020, and the first cohorts of students enrolled under the new curricula graduated during the reporting period. Six new courses were approved to fulfill the requirement.
- o We celebrated three significant research chairs deeply engaged with Indigenous knowledge: the renewed Gabriel Dumont Research Chair in Métis Studies held by Dr. Allyson Stevenson in the Department of Indigenous Studies; the newly created Tier 2 Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Justice and Wellbeing held by Dr. Robert Henry in the Department of Indigenous Studies; and the newly created Tier 2 Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Storytelling held by Dr. Kristina Bidwell in the Department of English.
- o Science outreach coordinator Cree Autumn Sunrise Longjohn [incorporated Cree syllabics and the cahkipêhikanak, or star chart, into lessons on cryptography](#) for Saskatoon schoolchildren as part of the Kamskénow program.
- o A new Department of Geography and Planning course [on environment and health in Indigenous communities](#) was offered in partnership with Mistawasis Nêhiyawak. Through the course, Mistawasis high school students visited campus and USask students spent a week living and learning on the land at the First Nation.
- o The Department of Indigenous Studies has developed a new upper-year undergraduate course focused on land-based learning and plans to offer a new international course on Mayan Studies starting in fall 2027.
- o In 2024, the Department of Political Studies launched its first Métis-centred course. POLST 324: Métis, *otehpayimusuk* and *âpihtawikosisânak* Governance [explores past and present governance of Métis in Canada](#).



- o The Department of English began a [renewal of a popular Indigenous storytelling course](#) to include additional participation by Indigenous writers and storytellers, including recorded interviews with local storytellers.
- o In the School for the Arts, a graduate-level course was redesigned to require critical analysis and reflection on wind band repertoire with Indigenous themes. The curated repertoire list was developed in collaboration with Indigenous community members and music educators, reinforcing culturally informed and ethically grounded engagement with Indigenous musical content.
- o The Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultural Studies collaborated with the University of Regina to offer a new interdisciplinary and experiential course that trains students to translate French Oblate documents from Indian Residential Schools. Residential school Survivors and experts from the Department of Indigenous Studies, the Office of the Treaty Commissioner, and other partners provided students with the contextual knowledge essential for understanding and accurately translating these documents.
- o Department of Anthropology faculty member Dr. Glenn Stuart was part of a community-led project with Sturgeon Lake First Nation and Crutwell Métis Local 66 that revealed [an 11,000-year-old Indigenous settlement near Prince Albert](#), one of the oldest known occupied sites on the continent.
- o Department of Indigenous Studies faculty member Randy Morin and Department of Computer Science faculty members Dr. Ralph Deters and Dr. Julita Vassileva were among the collaborators who created and hosted *Nisotak*, a web-based *néhiyawêwin* (Plains Cree) language learning system.
- o Department of Linguistics faculty member Dr. Olga Lovick released the second volume of [A Grammar of Upper Tanana, the first complete grammatical description of any of the Alaskan Dene languages](#). The book is the result of nearly two decades of collaboration between Lovick and a group of Northern Dene Elders.
- o The University Art Galleries and Collection launched many initiatives with campus-wide impact, including the Calls to Action banners in the Bowl; campus-wide lighting installations and projections responding to the confirmation of unmarked graves at Kamloops Residential School; the Orange Ribbon Project; and the Blanket Project. Indigenous knowledge systems and decolonial frameworks have been woven into exhibitions and events at the galleries throughout the last five years.

Representation – Ensuring Indigenous voices are present and heard

The College of Arts and Science advanced numerous activities and initiatives to increase the visibility in our spaces of Indigenous peoples, knowledge systems and cultural expressions. Academic units incorporated Indigenous perspectives directly into their teaching through the involvement of Elders, knowledge keepers, and community members, as well as through course content that foregrounds Indigenous scholarship and lived experience. Representation was further supported through dedicated recruitment, outreach, and student support roles. Exhibitions, performances, collaborative art projects and collections development highlighted Indigenous artists and narratives in highly visible locations while supporting the engagement and leadership development of Indigenous students. Our researchers engaged in practices such as co-authorship with Indigenous collaborators and the inclusion of Indigenous languages and epistemologies in knowledge dissemination as ways of recognizing contributions and authority.

However, Indigenous people remain underrepresented within our faculty, staff, and students compared to the general population of Saskatchewan. This representation in many cases is concentrated in specific units



and Science, our efforts have taken the form of partnerships with First Nations and Indigenous organizations, expanded opportunities for students to engage directly with communities through practica and field-based learning, and research collaborations that respond to community-identified priorities and include Indigenous partners in governance and oversight roles.

Joint course delivery, community-based teaching, public programming and applied research projects are some recent expressions of the relationships between our units and their partners. As a college, we have taken action to better recognize the value of relational work within academic structures, but gaps remain. Maintaining respectful relationships requires significant time, trust-building, and ongoing commitment. This can be difficult to sustain alongside existing faculty responsibilities, and the full scope of effort is not always adequately recognized. A college-wide shift toward ethical, reciprocal relationships will take ongoing commitment and support from all levels.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The College of Arts and Science revised its tenure, promotion and renewal standards to recognize the significance of community engagement, community-based research and contributions to Indigenization.
- The college signed a five-year *Asoṭa*, a knowledge sharing and creation partnership, with Mistawasis Nêhiyawak. Some outcomes:
 - The Department of Geography and Planning and Mistawasis Nêhiyawak jointly offered a land-based environment and health course for Mistawasis high school students and USask students.
 - Geography and planning faculty members gave guest lectures at Mistawasis Nêhiyawak High School and worked with community members to install a weather station.
 - Dr. Tara Kahan of the Department of Chemistry partnered with the First Nation on an indoor air quality study.
- The Department of Physics and Engineering Physics launched *Let's do Nuclear*, a new nuclear education program for high school students and teachers. The department is now coordinating with the Treaty Six Education Council of North Battleford to develop a collaborative program bringing the educational sessions to schools in partnering First Nations.
- The Department of Political Studies collaborated with Reconciliation Saskatoon to offer public programming, including "Indigenous Languages in Truth and Reconciliation," an event to discuss the fundamental importance of Indigenous languages to healing and moving forward in Truth and Reconciliation.
- The Department of Sociology partnered with organizations such as Saskatoon Tribal Council and the Office of the Treaty Commissioner to place Indigenous justice and criminology students in practicum opportunities.
- Faculty members engaged in dozens of long-term, collaborative research/scholarship relationships with Indigenous groups and organizations. Examples:
 - Dr. Kristina Bidwell of the Department of English is primary investigator on the research project "We're Still Here": Amplifying Urban Indigenous Stories in Saskatoon and St. John's through Indigenous-led Partnerships," a response to the TRC's Call to Action 65. The project was developed in partnership with the Gabriel Dumont Institute, Gabriel Dumont Métis Local 11, SAWCI (Saskatchewan Ânskôhk Writers Circle Inc.), and First Light (St. John's Friendship Centre), who are also part of its oversight committee. There are 17 co-applicants, the majority of whom are Indigenous, including scholars in the Department of History and Department of Indigenous Studies.



- Faculty in the Department of Anthropology maintain collaborations with more than 30 Indigenous nations, communities and organizations across Canada and internationally. Notably, USask archaeologists have been trusted partners with multiple communities on the ongoing search for missing children and unmarked burials at former residential school sites. Faculty member Dr. Terence Clark and graduates Micaela Champagne and Joshua Murphy [were nationally recognized for their contributions to this area](#).
- Drs. Krystopher Chutko and Robert Patrick of the Department of Geography and Planning worked with numerous First Nations to install or refurbish weather stations in their communities. Data from the stations is helping the communities make informed decisions on climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies.
- Dr. Bram Noble in the Department of Geography and Planning led USask's contribution to the [Accelerating Implementation of Renewable Energy for Indigenous Communities Project](#), a partnership with two First Nations seeking to reach emissions reduction targets.

Creation – Supporting innovation rooted in Indigenous ways of knowing

Over the past five years, new forms of teaching, artistic initiatives and student engagement have demonstrated the College of Arts and Science's aspirations to conjure the creative spirit. Our academic units developed alternative learning tools, curricula with decolonial frameworks, and programs that centre Indigenous perspectives. In the arts, we were part of the creation of new exhibitions, performances, compositions and a significant new award highlighting Indigenous artists and knowledge systems. Student-focused initiatives, including peer-led programming and mentorship structures, also contributed by supporting emerging scholars and creators.

HIGHLIGHTS

- A new annual [prize for Indigenous artists called ohpinamake was created through a donation by Jim and Marian Knock](#). Administered by the USask Art Galleries and Collection with support from the college's director of advancement, the \$10,000 prize seeks to uplift and recognize Indigenous artists while advancing reconciliation. Four artists have since been awarded the ohpinamake Prize.
- The Trish Monture Centre (TMC) is a central space in the Arts Building dedicated to Indigenous student success. Specialized academic advisors and an opportunities coach for Indigenous students are on staff. Academic initiatives hosted by the centre in the last year included cohort programs specifically for student parents, student leaders/mentors, and students interested in research or graduate studies.
- A team of five teachers from the Department of History and the College of Education created a board game titled *Homesteaders* to teach Indigenous and Canadian history, and tested its potential as a teaching tool. The team won a [D2L Innovation Award in Teaching and Learning](#) for its work.
- The Department of Political Studies created a Decolonization Reading Group for its graduate students alongside a larger curriculum reform that added required modules on Indigenous methodologies and theoretical engagement with decolonial, critical race and Indigenous perspectives.



Renewal – Embracing change, growth, and transformation

To reduce barriers and strengthen pathways for Indigenous success, the College of Arts and Science must support learners before, during, and after their time as students in our college. Our initiatives have therefore spanned outreach and online programming that builds a strong learning foundation for Indigenous youth in Saskatchewan; support and engagement work for students as they progress through our programs; and mentorship and experiential learning opportunities tied to opportunities in employment and further education. ISAP and the TMC remain anchors for our programming in this area, leading college-wide initiatives and supporting our departments and school with their own innovations. Our units have launched curriculum revisions, structural changes, and new K-12 outreach initiatives with the goal of enhancing academic preparation and broadening participation. Success stories abound in programs throughout the College of Arts and Science, but barriers remain, and the college has struggled to increase the overall enrolment of self-declared Indigenous students since 2021. Ongoing adaptation, sustained resources, and greater coordination is needed to ensure that access and support efforts deliver lasting academic and professional outcomes for students.

HIGHLIGHTS

- ISAP, the College of Arts and Science's successful Indigenous student success program, continued to increase its offerings and services.
 - In 2025, ISAP expanded its registration model to allow Indigenous students in any year of study to participate in ISAP common courses. The ISAP Summer Start program was also expanded to include opportunities for upper-year students.
 - The [ISAP STEM+ program was launched in 2023](#) with sponsorship from the International Minerals Innovation Institute to connect Indigenous students with mentors in science, technology, engineering and mathematics industries for early career experiences.
 - [New math and digital literacy programming](#) was created to help prepare Indigenous students for STEM degree paths through two significant donations from Orano Canada.
- The college's science outreach programs built on their success at bringing hands-on, culturally inclusive science learning activities to Indigenous K-12 students, helping them envision a future for themselves in STEM.
 - Each year, Kamskénow reached approximately 1,000 students in Saskatoon community schools with a high proportion of Indigenous students.
 - The Science Ambassador Program visited about a dozen schools in northern Indigenous communities each year, teaching up to 3,700 students annually.
- The TMC supported Indigenous undergraduate students interested in summer research opportunities with faculty mentors through the submission of research proposals. This summer, 10 Mitacs INDRA and eight NSERC USRA students will hold undergraduate research positions with culturally grounded support facilitated through the TMC Summer Scholars program and research skills training through the OVRP's SURE program.
- The Museum of Natural Sciences operates a field trip program for K-12 schools with a special focus on providing access to Indigenous students. More than 2,000 students participated each year, and the museum offered bus trips for schools with a higher proportion of low-income Indigenous students.
- The Department of Computer science saw the enrolment of self-declared Indigenous students grow at almost double the rate of its overall enrolment growth: a 259 per cent increase in Indigenous students between 2015 and 2025. The department also adapted its application processes for undergraduate



research positions to include voluntary self-declaration, ensuring the department aligns with equity-focused funding and commitments to wellness. Recruitment materials for research positions were changed to explicitly welcome Indigenous applicants.

- o The Department of English debuted a new honours-level course in Indigenous literatures, creating a potential pathway into graduate studies in this field.
- o To improve access for students in remote communities, the Department of Geological Sciences partnered with the provincial Distance Learning Centre to offer Earth Science 30 online to high school students. The course is an entry point to studying university-level geology.
- o The Department of Physics and Engineering Physics developed ASTR 104: Astronomy of Planets as a full online course. This was done with inclusion and accessibility in mind, with a focus on reducing geographic barriers for students in remote and Northern communities.
- o MATH 101 is a nontraditional mathematics course created as a fulfilment of the college's quantitative reasoning requirement for students who have limited or negative experiences with math. [Originally launched in 2020 by the Department of Mathematics and Statistics](#), the course has undergone significant updates in the last five years, collaborating with ISAP to provide additional academic coaching, and incorporating aspects of the seven fundamental commitments in its design. MATH 101 emphasizes community through collaborative groupwork and creating a safe and inclusive space for students to negotiate a consensus between a diversity of perspectives. One third of students who take the course self-identify as Indigenous. Overall student success rate in the course is 87 per cent.
- o The Department of Chemistry participated in individual mentorship of Indigenous youths through the Verna J. Kirkness Program. Students from high schools in communities such as Cumberland House and Peace River visited campus for one-on-one mentorship by faculty member Chris Phenix. Phenix, who is Métis, succeeded in overcoming barriers and building confidence in these students as they participated in research using radioactive tracers to observe how plants absorb nutrients.
- o Dr. Kelly Foley, faculty member in the Department of Economics, was part of an academic team that collaborated with federal and NGO partners in an effort to evaluate the national Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS). As a part of the evaluation, the team hosted online engagement workshops with the Indigenous organizations that delivered programs under ASETS contribution agreements.
- o The wicêhtowin Theatre Program in the School for the Arts demonstrated strong post-graduation pathways, with numerous graduates embarking on successful careers in the arts and cultural sector. The program also emphasizes hiring Indigenous instructors.



BE WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS



- Writer and Department of English graduate [Dr. Tenille Campbell](#) was selected as the Indigenous Storyteller-in-Residence at the University Library. In 2024, Campbell [was named one of the College of Arts and Science's Alumni of Influence](#).
- [Marcia Little](#) navigated university with support from faculty and campus services to persevere and complete her psychology degree. She is now an Indigenous student academic advisor in the College of Arts and Science.
- CGPS Grad HUB project team leader and Arts and Science sessional lecturer [Andrew Hartman](#) was encouraged to continue pursuing their PhD by a thesis supervisor when a newly diagnosed chronic illness caused them to throw away their originally planned timeline.
- Indigenous Student Achievement Pathways (ISAP) programs officer [Logan Martin-Arcand](#) frequently leads projects coinciding with USask's Indigenous Achievement Week, including the *Fried Bannock Project* in 2023.
- Political studies faculty member [Dr. Kathy Walker](#) became the sixth person and only the second woman appointed Treaty Commissioner of Saskatchewan in 2024.
- Geological sciences faculty member and Métis scientist [Dr. Colin Sproat](#) received the 2022 New Teacher Award in BSc Programs from the College of Arts and Science.
- In 2022, chemistry faculty member [Dr. Lee Wilson](#) was named to the Indigenous Leadership Circle in Research, which advises presidents of Canada's tri-agency funding groups and the Canada Foundation for Innovation.
- Indigenous studies faculty member [Randy Morin](#) is working to preserve Indigenous languages and ensure they not only survive, but thrive.
- Historian [Dr. Cheryl Troupe](#) received the Order of Gabriel Dumont Gold Medal for her outstanding contributions to the Métis people of Canada, including the publication of her book *Métis Matriarchs*. The book [also won the Indigenous History Book Prize](#) from the Canadian Historical Association.
- Drama faculty member and wîcêhtowin Theatre Program coordinator [Deneh'Cho Thompson](#) was the Canadian lead of a project to produce an original musical staged in Korea and Canada to mark the 2024-25 Canada-Korea Year of Cultural Exchanges and the 75th anniversary of the Korean War.
- USask professor emerita and former Acting Vice-Dean Indigenous [Dr. Priscilla Settee](#) was invited to speak to Canadian and world leaders on climate issues.
- Gabriel Dumont Research Chair in Métis Studies [Dr. Allyson Stevenson](#) of the Department of Indigenous Studies was one of four USask scholars named as Royal Society of Canada Fellows in 2025.
- Canada Research Chair and SK-NEIHR principal investigator [Dr. Robert Henry](#) is leading a \$2 million initiative to develop substance use interventions grounded in Indigenous knowledge and experience.
- Arts and Science Vice-Dean Indigenous [Dr. Angela Jaime](#) was appointed to the Vice-Provost Indigenous Engagement position in 2023.



Future Plans and Recommendations

As the College of Arts and Science continues on its path toward sustained and system-wide transformation in alignment with the commitments of *ohpahotân* | *oohpaahotaan*, several opportunities for meaningful change have emerged.

- Academic units in the college recently underwent academic program reviews. Many units explicitly considered *ohpahotân* | *oohpaahotaan* principles and commitments during this process and will be implementing their learnings into upcoming curriculum revisions.
- The position profile for the college's Vice-Dean Indigenous was written prior to the gifting of the Indigenous Strategy, and needs to be revised and updated to reflect current university structures and policies. This work has already begun, and we are grateful to the members of the college community for their patience during the period of reflection and consultation necessary for this process.
- We have seen growth in the number of courses approved to meet the college's Indigenous Learning Requirement. However, many faculty members who are eager to contribute their disciplinary perspectives to the requirement have experienced challenges and frustrations with the approval process to date. Efforts to revise the process have so far failed to reach a consensus among our faculty. We must foster a safe and courageous space to collaboratively address the structural barriers that exist in this process so that our students have wider options for fulfilling this vital learning requirement.
- Instances of racism continue to occur in our college. A more transparent reporting system that aligns with institutional policy on discrimination, racism, and harassment is needed. A clear pathway from report to action to remedy must be visible, and the pace towards resolution needs to be more timely and effective.
- We must recognize that institutional processes and structures can be intimidating, confusing, or even traumatic for students of diverse backgrounds. As the college with the largest number of academic integrity hearings, we should review our integrity violations process to consider if a more nuanced, less binary approach is warranted. Students should have access to resources to inform and advocate for themselves. We should review the terms of reference for scholarships and bursaries to ensure there are no barriers to access and that students are not retraumatized by the detailed information they are asked to provide when applying, some of which is not absolutely necessary (e.g., financial needs calculator).
- We should consider more flexible and open admissions policies for students who wish to enrol or reenrol as adults. Some Indigenous students have been required to discontinue because they lacked the support they needed or could not access it when it was most needed; more flexible and holistic grade forgiveness policies are an option we might consider. We should examine non-credit programming as an entry point to higher education and a means of improving access, particularly if it is offered online in an asynchronous, pass-fail format.
- Students desire more land-based learning opportunities. While these offerings are more resource intensive and are more challenging to scale, we are compelled to study successful models in our college and see how they can be expanded or replicated in a resource-constrained environment.
- To increase our enrolment of Indigenous students, we must engage with prospective students starting earlier in their lives. We should visit communities when prospective students are still in elementary school and we should provide check-in supports that more meaningfully establish long-term relationships based on trust and respect with USask and communities. We must recruit not only



students, but their families—by clearly and continually demonstrating the value of higher education and our commitment to delivering a positive, transformative learning experience for all Indigenous students.

CONCLUSION

Over the past five years, the College of Arts and Science has engaged in the ongoing work of bringing *ohpahotân* | *oohpaahotaan* to life, guided by the shared responsibility to centre Indigenous voices, strengthen relationships, and pursue reconciliation through action. As this report has shown, progress has taken shape through evolving practices, programs, partnerships, and policies that reflect the seven fundamental commitments: Safety, Wellness, Stewardship, Representation, Right Relations, Creation, and Renewal. These efforts have contributed to early but meaningful forms of critical systems change, shifting not only what we do, but how we understand our roles as educators, researchers, and community members.

Yet our reflections affirm that this work is not linear, complete, or evenly realized. Growth has often emerged through learning, discomfort, and the recognition of gaps, showing that transformation requires humility, accountability, and sustained commitment. As we look back, we see a college that is increasingly aware of its responsibilities and more intentional in its actions; as we move forward, we do so with the understanding that this journey is collective and ongoing.