

ohpahotân | oohpaahotaan (Let's Fly Up Together)
Phase 4 Report

College of Medicine
Date: June 2026

BE WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS

Foreword

In Robin Wall Kimmerer's 2024 book "The Serviceberry," the author and botanist teaches the importance of gratitude, reciprocity, and community, through the lessons of the small, unassuming, yet critical serviceberry. The central message of this lesson—"All flourishing is mutual". Throughout Saskatchewan and other parts of the country, the serviceberry is more commonly known as the saskatoon berry. A fitting metaphor for a relatively small school with the capacity for great impact. The College of Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan is the only medical school in the province, highlighted in its new mission statement: "Our college cultivates the health and well-being of all peoples of Saskatchewan through service, education, scholarship and research that matter." Here Wall Kimmerer's lessons on the serviceberry and the college's vision for the future align in the pursuit of a healthier future for all. The College of Medicine's contributions towards the ohpahotân | oohpaahotaan Indigenous Strategy are reflective of the college's intentions to be rooted in its local community, with the goal of creating a work and learning environment where students, staff, and faculty can thrive.

In Plains Cree miyo-maskihkiy means Good Medicine. The pursuit of miyo-maskihkiy has been a driving force in the University of Saskatchewan's College of Medicine for more than two decades, as the organization seeks to uplift and advance the health needs of the population in Saskatchewan. Many of the students, staff, and faculty who come to work and learn in the College of Medicine do so in the pursuit of a healthier future for communities across Saskatchewan. When speaking of her graduate research one [College of Medicine student](#) shared: "The health of my family started off as the main driver for my research but, as I progressed, my focus now extends to future generations and leaders." This recognition of the importance of service is one that guides many of our learners. As a post-secondary institution and place of learning, the experiences of our students must be central to any efforts to improve and adapt. This is an opportunity which renews itself. We can and must continue to do better, to evolve, and aspire to flourish collectively.

A learner's journey with the College of Medicine begins long before their acceptance. Many have dreamt of their future careers as healthcare providers for years, if not decades. The college meets with these dreamers at schools across the province, attending career fairs and science fairs to connect with young people to encourage them to consider a career in health. In an attempt to address historic and contemporary underrepresentation many of the College of Medicine programs have dedicated seats for Indigenous learners, from physiotherapy to medicine, and our new incoming programs of speech-language pathology and occupational therapy. We continue to prioritize a representational work force, striving to reflect the diversity of our province. In 2022 the undergraduate medical education program debuted a renewed [Indigenous Admissions Pathway](#) (IAP), an alternative to the longstanding admissions pathway. The IAP is a holistic admissions process, that centers and grounds the applicant in a network of community and support. Current Indigenous medical students act as hosts throughout the day, sharing their highlights of the program and offering tours. Indigenous residents, upper year students, physicians, and College of Medicine faculty members conduct Conversation Circles, where participants get the opportunity to share their stories and those listening to the stories learn about the applicants on a more personal level. Admissions decisions are made by consensus, and the day's activities begin and end in a good way with the support of Elders/Knowledge Keepers who provide spiritual guidance and cultural support to applicants and circle members alike.

The School of Rehabilitation Science and the undergraduate medical education program both employ Indigenous Initiatives Coordinators, critical members of the student support team. These staff members are more than friendly faces--they work tirelessly to create welcoming environments for Indigenous learners. They create spaces to gather, share, and learn from one another, often long before students are admitted to College of Medicine programs. From beading to painting, there is a recognition that cultural connection and a sense of belonging are critical to the success of Indigenous students in our programs. Ribbon skirt sewing sessions have been popular over the past few years and provide students an opportunity to rest and recharge. Recently, the Office Vice-Dean Indigenous Health has welcomed a traditional knowledge teacher to its staffing complement.

This has created the opportunity for students to deepen their knowledge of Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being. The office has offered lunch and learn sessions on protocol for ceremonies and introduced monthly pipe ceremonies and the opportunity to participate in a sweat ceremony. As the role expands, so too will the opportunities for connection and community. Students are able to meet with a growing team of Indigenous support staff for a word of encouragement, reassurance, and ceremony when they need. There are future plans to share teachings on life stages and societal roles, in addition to land-based learning about traditional medicines. Other areas of the college are offering new initiatives to tend to student mental health, including the Office of Student Affairs which now offers students the ability to seek identity aligned mentorship and support through the [Physician Advocate for Learners Program](#). A multitude of avenues for support ensure that students have flexibility in accessing relevant and culturally appropriate guidance.

As a post-secondary institution, learning is the central focus of program activities and efforts. Students are often the drivers and champions of necessary curricular change, particularly where marginalized populations are concerned. College of Medicine students are quick to challenge outdated, inaccurate, or potentially harmful materials in the curriculum, while simultaneously advocating for strengths-based, evidence-informed, and holistic approaches to medicine. This holds true for topics related to Indigenous health. In a 2024 research project on the implementation of TRC Call #24 one student shared:

[...] talking about relationships like relationship with self, relationship with others, relationship with community, that's wâhkôhtowin. And those, those principles, those ways of life, they can be incorporated. We can bring in other other, those 'win' words like wâhkôhtowin, is like a principle that guides us and we can bring in more in a way that does fit.

This statement highlights the value of incorporating Indigenous Ways of Being, particularly where interconnectedness, reciprocity, and community are concerned. The curriculum in the undergraduate medical education program has seen many updates over the last few years under the road map of Indigenous Health to include sessions like Indigenous Peoples: History and Health and Indigenous Peoples: Strength, Resilience, Healing and Wellness through the Generations II. Sessions like this help to form the foundations of the program and planning is currently underway to welcome the class of 2030 with a land-based orientation session integrate them into the program. As they pursue their degrees, learners have the opportunity to complete a rural family medicine rotation with communities such as Lac La Ronge Indian Band, Hatchet Lake First Nation, Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation, and English River First Nation. These placements embed learners in community and position them to better understand the specific healthcare needs of the populations they serve. As they head towards graduation there are many opportunities to deepen knowledge of traditional health and healing practices through the Indigenous Health Elective which includes placement opportunities at the innovative All Nations Healing Hospital in Fort Qu'Appelle and Sturgeon Lake Health Centre. Learners who have completed these electives shared feedback like:

"I learned about all the services offered to Indigenous people, participated in cultural ceremonies, and experienced traditions. Rather than being on the outside and learning, we were welcomed and immersed into the culture. It was a very positive experience."

These placements have also been an opportunity for the College of Medicine to recognize community leadership and expertise with a new reciprocity initiative for compensating community partners. This initiative includes financial compensation where appropriate, in addition to gifts and other offerings. The push for this change came from community and was championed by College of Medicine staff and faculty, ultimately setting a precedent for establishing strong relationships in the future.

The accomplishments of Indigenous students in the College of Medicine are demonstrative of the contributions of family, peers, community, teachers, friends and others whose investments of time and energy ensure these learners flourish. The senior lead, Indigenous initiatives and programming, commented on the leadership skills of [two students who created t-shirts for Red Dress Day](#), remarking:

I am so incredibly proud of the Indigenous students for their dedication, and heart for our community. They both are strong leaders, humble, committed to social justice issues and strong advocates for change, not only at the community level, but in medical education at the local and national levels (Mynhardt, 2025, para. 7).

Through the college's renewed focus on recognition, our students are routinely celebrated for their contributions to their school, community, and profession. In 2026 six College of Medicine students received [Indigenous Achievement Week Awards](#), recognized for their contributions to community engagement, leadership, and research. Zoey Bourgeois, winner of the 2026 Indigenous Health Advocacy Learner Award, [Canadian Medical Association Ambassador](#) and undergraduate medicine student highlighted the supports that helped her navigate medical school:

The Indigenous medical student community and Indigenous faculty and staff at the University of Saskatchewan have become a profound source of belonging. They have supported and uplifted me, and some of the most meaningful work I do is alongside them (Canadian Medical Association [CMA], 2026).

The College of Medicine is grateful for all learners, staff, and faculty who embody our college's values and center accountability, belonging, collaboration, curiosity, and well-being in all they do.

As we look to the future, we recognize the multitude of ways that the College of Medicine is being called to nurture authentic relationships, meaningful community engagement, and a work and learning environment which allows all students to flourish. The seven commitments of *ohpahotân | oohpaahotaan* provide the guidance necessary to accomplish these goals. We have heard the profound impact safe spaces have on Indigenous learners and witnessed the positive impact of wellness initiatives that nurture belonging and healing. The importance of stewardship is reflected in protocol learnings and opportunities to participate in ceremony. We bolster right relationships by establishing reciprocal relationships with community partners and nurture creation by inviting them to participate in culturally responsive learning and programming. Finally, we look at this generation and seven generations ahead as we prioritize representation of Indigenous learners in our classrooms, while also continuing to be innovative in our recruitment efforts, forging relationships with university and community partners to reach the next generation of healthcare providers. Rooted in community, we shape a healthier future.

Thank you to the Indigenous student, staff and faculty who worked to review this report, ensuring an accurate and rich account of the work done in the past five years and a meaningful commitment to continued progress in the years to come.

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Department of Indigenous Health and Wellness opening celebration in 2023. The new department will be Indigenous-led and ensure research is informed by Indigenous community needs. *Photo by Paige Bell*

EXPLORING THE PAST, EXAMINING THE PRESENT, AND PAVING A PATH FOR THE FUTURE

The College of Medicine cultivates the health and well-being of all peoples of Saskatchewan through service, education, scholarship and research that matter. As we reflect on the past five years of work and progress that the college has made, we remain aware of, and committed to, the continued work to transform the research, teaching, and service of our college to uplift Indigenous knowledge, values, stories, and voices.

The key achievements of the College of Medicine are included in this report, achievements that embody the seven commitments of *ohpahotân | oohpaahotaan*. The college has made progress, but we acknowledge the presence and persistence of challenges in attaining the goals of the strategy. Our commitment to the gift of *ohpahotân | oohpaahotaan* is reflected in the acknowledgement of these challenges and the plans we have made to directly address these in the coming years.

The College of Medicine

The College of Medicine includes over 20 departments, academic units, offices, and the School of Rehabilitation Science. The college is home to approximately 2,600 students, 700 staff, and 2,200 faculty. These numbers continues to grow, with two new graduate programs welcoming their inaugural class in the 2026/27 academic year and new clinical departments being established for the training of medical residents.

Recognizing the need for current demographic data to accurately assess the demographic profile of the college, the Office Vice Dean Indigenous Health (OVDIH) developed a questionnaire to assess the demographics of staff and faculty within the college in the fall of 2025.¹ At that point in time, 4.6% of faculty, 12% of senior academic and educational leaders, and 7.2% of other staff and members of the college who responded self-identified² as Indigenous. Student responses were not well reflected in the 2025 questionnaire. Data from the 2023/24 academic year, however, found 106 learners in the College of Medicine self-identified as Indigenous. This represented 10% of undergraduate learners, 8% of graduate-level learners, and 5% of post-graduate medical residents in the college.

The College of Medicine has 10 Indigenous specific staff positions:

- Senior Lead, Indigenous Initiatives and Programming
- Indigenous Initiatives Coordinator, School of Rehabilitation Science
- Indigenous Coordinator, Regina Campus (new in 2021)
- Vice-Dean Indigenous Health (new in 2022)
- Indigenous Health Elective Coordinator (new in 2023)
- Associate Professor, Community Health & Epidemiology (new in 2025)
- Indigenous Protocol & Relation Specialist (new in 2025)
- Indigenous Research Specialist (new in 2025)
- Executive Assistant, Office Vice-Dean Indigenous Health (new in 2026)
- Assistant Professor, School of Rehabilitation Science (new in 2026)

Faculty live and work in geographically diverse areas of the province, providing training to medical students, residents, and graduate-level students. The college relies deeply on community partnerships in its education and research, including research partnerships, community-based learning placements, experiential learning opportunities, and guest speakers across many topic areas.

The College of Medicine's educational programming is comprised of:

- Undergraduate programs
 - Biomedical Sciences (BSc)
 - Medical Doctor (MD)
- Graduate programs
 - Anatomy, Physiology, & Pharmacology (MSc and PhD)
 - Biochemistry, Microbiology, & Immunology (MSc and PhD)
 - Community Health & Epidemiology (MSc and PhD)
 - Health Sciences (MSc and PhD)
 - Occupational Therapy (MOT)
 - Physician Assistant Students (MPAS)
 - Physical Therapy (MPT)
 - Speech-Language Pathology (MSLP)
- Residency programs
 - Postgraduate Medical Education (PGME)
- Continuing education programs
 - Continuing education in rehabilitation sciences
 - Continuing medical education
 - Continuing professional development
- Diploma and certificate programs

¹ The overall response rate was approximately 18% to 25%, with between 4,000 and 5,500 individuals invited to participate.

² In alignment with the University's truth policy - [deybwewin](#) | [taapwaywin](#) | [tapwewin](#) – a recommendation has been made for identifying Indigenous staff, faculty, and students.

- Certificate in Global Health
- Clinician Educator Diploma
- Clinician Investigator Program

Social Accountability

Social accountability, established by the World Health Organization (1995), is the obligation of medical schools “to direct their education, research and service activities towards addressing the priority health concerns of the community, region, and/or nation they have a mandate to serve. The priority health concerns are to be identified jointly by governments, health care organizations, health professionals and the public”.

The Division of Social Accountability was established in 2011 to uphold the social accountability mandate of the College of Medicine. In 2023 this unit moved under the OVDIH, with a social justice mission to humbly walk alongside all people of Saskatchewan and the College of Medicine towards equitable health, well-being, and belonging; seeking truth and justice now and for the future generations. The OVDIH builds and challenges the capacity of the college community to enhance the skills, attitudes, and education necessary to support the citizens of Saskatchewan so they can grow and thrive. From this office, the division works across all areas of the college to provide support, foster growth, and advocate for change in the pillars of social accountability, community engagement, and equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility.

Social accountability has been highlighted here as a lever that can both challenge and support efforts to improve access to, and experiences within, the college for Indigenous staff, faculty, staff, and communities.

Priority Health Concerns in Saskatchewan

In 2023/24, the Division of Social Accountability engaged with Saskatchewan communities to establish the [priority health concerns](#) for the population of Saskatchewan. Ten priority health concerns were identified, reinforced by data from health care organizations and governments. The college is committed to addressing these health concerns, with efforts including curricular advancements, research, admissions and mentorship pathways, learning opportunities, and more.

One of the areas of focus in the priority health concerns is *Anti-Racism, Cultural Safety & Decolonization*. This includes topics such as Indigenous health, cultural safety, trauma-informed care, and holistic health, and requires healthcare providers to be informed and skilled on relevant topics. Research demonstrates that in order for a workforce to be effective in addressing a population’s healthcare it must also be representative of the population (Froger et al., 2023; The Sullivan Commission, 2004; Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada [TRC], 2012). Ultimately, to address this as a priority health concern in Saskatchewan efforts must be made to ensure applicants to and matriculants from the college are diverse and reflective of Saskatchewan communities.

Prior to the Gifting of ohpahotân | oohpaahotaan

The College of Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan is the only medical school in the province. As such, the college has recognized the important role it plays in serving all people of the province through its education, research, and service. Programs, initiatives, and staff positions were implemented to provide learning opportunities on the history of colonization, to allow community knowledge to inform curricular innovation, and to provide supports for Indigenous students, both prospective and current. Many of these initiatives and programs are discussed in this report, as they continue to be integral to efforts of the college in supporting Indigenous students and uplifting ohpahotân | oohpaahotaan.

This includes the Indigenous Admissions Pathway. Created in 2001 this program has shown a steady intake of Indigenous applicants admitted to the medical doctor program since its inception. The senior lead, Indigenous

initiatives & programming, is a position that was created more than 15 years ago, with one staff member holding this position since that time. The dedication, community connections, commitment to student wellbeing, and advocacy for the integration of Indigenous knowledge, artistic creations, and culture that is carried out through this position has consistently been identified by students as a highlight of the undergraduate medical education program for Indigenous students and potential students. The [*Pathways Support for Indigenous Students to Pursue Medicine Award*](#) is a pre-med financial support program that has proven to be a very successful pathway into medicine. Since the program launched in 2003, 42 Indigenous students have been accepted into the College of Medicine. Other initiatives include the Indigenous Health Sciences Committee and continuing medical education courses provided to faculty and students for enhanced learning.

Despite efforts, a report card on the work of the college, created by the Indigenous Physicians Association of Canada (IPAC) and based on Indigenous student voice and experience, found that in 2020/21 most student respondents felt dissatisfied in efforts taken related to cultural competency training and learning opportunities on the history and legacy of residential schools. Positive responses were provided at the time on efforts to recruit Indigenous students into the healthcare field. The college has been fortunate to receive an annual report card through this accountability mechanism, and we reflect on this throughout this report. The Phase 4 report outlines critical changes that have been made to these initiatives, which have been renewed to better meet the needs of Indigenous students and community partners and to uphold commitments to the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action 23 & 24 (TRC, 2012) and the ohpahotân | oohpaahotaan strategy.

Experiences of Indigenous Students

Experiences of Indigenous students in the College of Medicine were gathered for the phase 4 report from a variety of sources. One of the data sources used was the annual Medical School Report Card released by the Indigenous Physicians Association of Canada (IPAC) on the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action 23 & 24. This report card utilizes a survey to hear from Indigenous medical students across Canada, with each medical school receiving a report and grade based on their own students' voices. The report card continues to be a highly relevant and useful document in our efforts to improve. Other data sources for this report included college communications, funder reports, and prior conversations with learners. These experiences have been embedded into the report, as they related to findings of college-level shifts in programs and policies.

These college-level achievements aim to improve the experiences and successes of Indigenous students, as well as Indigenous staff, faculty, and communities. However, the full impacts of these changes are not understood, including the need for ongoing change and advancement. Recommendations to improve upon our understanding of Indigenous student experiences in the college, as well as experiences of Indigenous staff and faculty, have been made at the conclusion of this report.

Achievements in the College of Medicine

This report focuses on telling the story of initiatives and policy reforms in 4 key areas:

1. Student Pathways, Mentorship, and Leadership
2. Space, Staffing, and College Leadership
3. Community-College Relationship & Reciprocity
4. Staff, Student, and Faculty Learning

Multiple data sources were used to identify these program and policy achievements, as well as the challenges faced and next steps for the College of Medicine in uplifting ohpahotân | oohpaahotaan. The Social Accountability Committee of the college, department heads, and leaders were invited to contribute evidence, while available reports and communication articles were referenced for additional data. An iterative approach to data analysis was used to combine distinct data sources into final themes (Appendix A). The information and

data used to generate these themes does not encompass the full breadth of work done in the College of Medicine but is based on what was provided at the time this report was completed.

Through this iterative approach, key changes, advancements, and transformations that uphold the seven commitments and honor Indigenous Ways of Knowing, embed reciprocity and relational accountability in college-community relationships, and formalize processes and space for Indigenous students and community were identified. These system-change achievements have led to space being held for Indigenous student admissions, mentorship and leadership, as well as an increased awareness among faculty and staff on critical issues such as cultural humility, anti-racism, anti-oppression, equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility (EDIA), and Indigenous health. Curricular advancements, student admission pathways, and dedicated space and staffing honor Indigenous Ways of Knowing, while reciprocity and relational accountability are embedded in select bylaws and procedures that guide college-community relationships.

CONTINUING OUR JOURNEY

In the fall of 2025, the college released its strategic plan, *Paving Our Path to 2030*. The plan is a guide for the next five years and outlines shared commitments, focus areas, and goals that will help us shape a healthier future.

This plan recognizes our shared commitment to advancing *ohpahotân | oohpaahotaan*.

- emphasizes a renewal of our college commitment to learning, growth, and continued transformation
- demonstrates leadership-level commitment to intentional and meaningful action

Our college is guided by a set of core values: accountability, belonging, collaboration, curiosity and well-being. These values define what is important to us and are demonstrated through our everyday actions and decisions. While many challenges and gaps have been identified in the final sections of this report, these are the key drivers of 10 recommendations that are made. These recommendations are the next steps to advance the work of the College of Medicine and uplift the seven commitments of *ohpahotân | oohpaahotaan*.

Paving Our Path to 2030, College of Medicine Strategic Plan can be found [here](#).



SRS Indigenous Initiatives Coordinator Liz Durocher and MPT student Hannah Courtoreille in the Good Medicine People Space. Hannah received a 2026 USask Indigenous Achievement Award. *Photo by David Stobbe*

ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE COLLEGE OF MEDICINE

In order for the College of Medicine to reflect on progress made since the gifting of ohpahotân | oohpaahotaan, a thematic review of programs, policies, and initiatives undertaken was completed. These themes arose through an iterative process that assessed evidence collected from multiple data sources. Evidence was generated through a facilitated discussion with the Social Accountability Committee of the college, a survey sent to department heads and leaders, and reports and communication articles (Appendix B).

The College has made changes and advancements that uphold the seven commitments and honour Indigenous Ways of Knowing in 4 key areas.

1. Student Pathways, Mentorship, and Leadership
2. Space, Staffing, and College Leadership
3. Community-College Relationship & Reciprocity
4. Staff, Student, and Faculty Learning

These are areas that have demonstrated steps undertaken towards reciprocity and relational accountability in college-community relationships and formalized processes and spaces for Indigenous students and community. The initiatives and policy reforms within these areas are provided in Appendix A.

Student Pathways, Mentorship, and Leadership

The college believes that in order for young people in our province to consider the pursuit of a medical degree, early and ongoing engagement and exposure to the college and programs within is needed. The college

connects with youth annually in both post-secondary and high school through participation in career fairs, the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN) Science Fair, and the University's Indigenous student experience day and open house, showcasing career opportunities in healthcare and taking inspiration from the curiosity and candor of young minds. For example, the recruitment and admissions administrative coordinator travelled to Meadow Lake (hosted by the tribal council for all nearby Indigenous communities), North Battleford (hosted by Northwest College with attendance from many nearby and northwest Indigenous communities), Prince Albert (hosted by Saskatchewan Rivers School Division with invitations to northern Indigenous communities), Mistawasis First Nation, and Fishing Lake First Nation in 2024/25. Other communities were reached through career fairs hosted in 2023/24, including Big River First Nation, Ahtahkakoop First Nation, One Arrow First Nation, and Yellow Quill First Nation. These communities only reflect a portion of the work, as the senior lead, Indigenous initiatives & programming, is actively engaged in many community events for First Nations and Métis communities throughout the year. Looking to the future there is a continued emphasis on strengthening initiatives that support the pathway of Indigenous learners into the college through partnership with the Office of the Vice-Provost Indigenous Engagement (OVPIE) and programs like Building Intercultural Resilience Mentorship (BIRM) and the Indigenous Summer Institute.



Val Arnault, Senior Lead, Indigenous Initiatives and Programming and Davis Frerich, Admissions and Recruitment Administrator, at a recruitment event. *Photo submitted*

In 2022 the college introduced the Indigenous Admissions Circle, which offers Indigenous applicants a dedicated pathway to the medical doctor program. While an Indigenous Admissions Pathway was not new for the college,³ meaningful improvements to the previous pathway were made. The previous pathway reserved 10% of seats for Indigenous learners; however, the intention was to also create a culturally safe and inclusive way of reviewing Indigenous applicants who selected the pathway. Eventual improvements include participation in a conversation circle, an alternative to the panel interviews where applicants are reviewed through an Indigenous lens in a culturally safe and inclusive space by a thoughtful collective of Indigenous students, residents, and faculty. The Indigenous Admissions Circle process has been led by the senior lead, Indigenous initiatives & programming, who ensures that every step is as welcoming and accepting as possible. Elders greet the applicants upon arrival, offering words of encouragement and providing guidance and support to all circle members. Additional supports are made available throughout the process, in addition to a few furry friends who help to calm nerves by way of the PAWS Your Stress Therapy Dog Program. In 2022, the college doubled the total number of seats reserved for Indigenous people in the program, bringing the total to 20 dedicated seats. The change in number of seats was made to facilitate a medical student population that was more representative of Saskatchewan's general population (17% according to 2021 Census) and resulted in 18.5 % of seats at that point in time being reserved for Indigenous applicants. In the first year of this change, 11 Indigenous students, were welcomed into the program.⁴ Individuals who choose to apply through this process are verified through the *deybwewin | taapwaywin | tapwewin*: Indigenous Truth policy. All changes to the Indigenous Admissions Circle were approved by Indigenous partners.

³ The Indigenous Admissions Pathway (IAP) was introduced in 2001 by the College of Medicine.

⁴ In the two years prior, less than 10 Indigenous students were admitted each year. The undergraduate medical program has been unable to fill the 20 dedicated seats to date.



Top: Zoey Bourgeois, winner of the 2026 AFMC Indigenous Health Advocacy Learner Award. Photo by Davis Frerichs. Middle: Samantha Leech, recipient of a USask Indigenous Student Achievement Award for leadership. Photo submitted. Bottom: Michelle Desjarlais, recipient of a USask Indigenous Student Achievement Award for leadership. Photo submitted.

The [School of Rehabilitation Sciences](#) has dedicated seats for Indigenous learners in all of its programs, with verification through the Indigenous Truth policy. In 2025, the [Master of Physician Assistant Studies \(MPAS\) program](#) was launched in the college. The program is committed to promoting diversity and ensuring educational equity, with factors, such as Saskatchewan and rural connectedness, Indigenous background, and various intersections of diversity, considered at every stage of the process. Indigenous applicants are encouraged to complete the verification process through the Indigenous Truth policy. These applicants are assessed by Indigenous reviewers through a holistic lens and have the option to have their interview conducted by members of the Indigenous community.

The perspectives and experiences of Indigenous medical students in the college, captured by a Medical School Report Card released by the Indigenous Physician Association of Canada (IPAC), found a substantial improvement after the introduction of the admissions circle (C+ in 2021/22 compared to a A+ in 2023/24). Students indicated that dedicated staff, a separate admission pathway, and active recruitment through lunches, high school engagement, and community visits contributed to feelings of satisfaction with the college. Further, improvements in the provision of accessible resources and supports to prospective students through the application process were identified, such as mock interviews and MCAT preparation.

Beyond dedicated seats, the college strives to address barriers to medical school through mentorship and support. The senior lead, Indigenous initiatives & programming engages with Indigenous learners across the continuum of their relationship with the college, hosting soup and Bannock lunches and cultural activities, such as beading, painting, and ribbon skirt making, for all Indigenous health science learners as a means of connecting to culture and strengthening relationships. First-year Indigenous medical students are welcomed at a special gathering attended by Indigenous students, staff and faculty, with the senior lead, Indigenous initiatives & programming, providing support to Indigenous students through all years of the program. In the School of Rehabilitation Sciences a parallel staff position exists, the Indigenous initiatives coordinator, providing support to the students in this school. Both prospective and current Indigenous students are able to meet one-on-one with the senior lead, Indigenous initiatives & programming, in a safe, respectful environment for relationship building and the introduction of supports and resources that are available. The [Price of a Dream \(POD\) fee waiver program](#) is also available for all applicants, providing financial support to help address the personal and systemic financial barriers individuals face when applying to medical

school. Small pockets of Indigenous-specific funding are available, such as the Wardman Scholarship, established in 2023/24 by the college's advancement team with donor Dr. Dennis Wardman and Family, to recognize the academic achievement of an Indigenous student completing second year of the UGME program. The [Pathways Support for Indigenous Students to Pursue Medicine Award](#) has been in place since 2003, although renewals and revisions have been made over time. This award has been continuously promoted to help Indigenous undergraduate students finance their education with the eventual goal of applying to the College of Medicine.

The college has supported mentorship (for both mentors and mentees) through various avenues, including partnership with IPAC. This partnership allowed for the opportunity to host the 2025 IPAC Annual Mentorship Gathering in Saskatoon. This gathering was an opportunity to celebrate and showcase our program from the Saskatoon Campus. Leadership opportunities for learners have also been expanded in the last five years, facilitated by the creation and ratification of the Indigenous Medical Students Association, in 2022 and 2023 respectively. A mentorship program called the 'wakohtowin mentorship program' was introduced in 2020 and was enhanced with involvement from the Indigenous Medical Student Association of Saskatchewan (IMSAS) (formed in 2022 and ratified in 2023), the recruitment and admissions administrative coordinator, the senior lead, Indigenous initiatives & programming, and the career advising and mentorship coordinator. The 'wakohtowin mentorship program' was created to formalize the planning and implementation of outreach events with the goal of helping prospective Indigenous applicants learn about medical school and hear from current students about their journeys into the program. Since 2020, 28 students have participated in the mentorship program and 8 of those students were accepted into medicine. College of Medicine students remain highly engaged with the college's work, earning local and national awards for their authentic engagement and leadership. This excellence is demonstrated through two students, Riley Plett and Zoey Bourgeois, being awarded the Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada (AFMC) Indigenous Health Advocacy Learner Award in 2025 and 2026.

Student concerns regarding perceived inequality of supports and services between the Regina and Saskatoon campus were raised and to address these concerns, the Senior Lead, Indigenous Programming & Initiatives in Saskatoon increased collaboration and working relationships with the Regina UGME team to better support Indigenous students at this campus. The Senior Lead visits the Regina campus on a quarterly basis, hosting a bannock and tea open to all students. An Indigenous Coordinator position was established in Regina in 2021, providing direct support to Indigenous students at this campus and increasing connections to the surrounding community. The dedication and meaningful work of the senior lead, Val Arnault, to support Indigenous students at the College of Medicine was recently celebrated and recognized nationally by the [Association of Faculties of Medicine Canada with the Indigenous Health Advocacy Lifetime Contribution Award](#).

Space, Staffing, and College Leadership

In 2024 the College of Medicine [celebrated the opening of miyo maskihkêwiyiniwak, the Good Medicine People Space](#), an initiative led by Dr. Holly Graham. This is a dedicated space that aims to:

- create a culturally safe environment for Indigenous students
- provide an ethical and relational space for cultural learning and ceremony
- provide opportunities for health science learners to practice cultural safety, advocacy, equity and address issues like racism and reconciliation
- share Indigenous worldviews
- provide a culturally appropriate environment to conduct research with Indigenous participants

The space started with a pipe ceremony, opening ceremonies and honoring of participants. This space has since hosted many lunch and learns, community meetings, beading sessions, traditional teaching sessions, and recently a pipe ceremony. It is a space of interprofessional collaboration, connection over shared meals, and community relationships. The large braided sweetgrass installation that hangs from the ceiling carries cultural and symbolic meaning, an important reminder to weave together knowledge and resources in service to collective well-being. This ceremonial ring of braided sweetgrass was accomplished by 3D printer and is the first

of its kind in Canada. This room, and the many people who have gathered within it, uplift the seven commitments of ohpahotân | oohpaahotaan.

The School of Rehabilitation Sciences is currently undergoing an expansion of its programs, welcoming the first incoming classes of occupational therapy and speech-language therapy in the fall of 2026. In the work to revamp space for expansion, the school has planned the inclusion of a dedicated Indigenous space. In addition to dedicated space, cultural symbols, like a [buffalo robe](#), photographs of pow wow dancers gifted by Dr. Ivar Mendez, and art installations by local artists like Kevin Peeace, can be found throughout the Health Sciences Building. This work has been led by the University of Saskatchewan Indigenous Space and Visual Symbols in the Health Sciences Committee, uplifting Indigenous peoples in the University through artistic works and representation.

The creation of a senior leadership position through the Office Vice Dean Indigenous Health (OVDIH) was a milestone for the college and was created by the Indigenous Health Committee over many years led by Dr. Veronica McKinney and a team of USask staff and faculty. Dr. Janet Tootoosis was appointed to this important role as interim Vice-Dean in 2022 and made permanent in 2023. Through this office, the Vice Dean provides leadership to the college on the Indigenization of the college and ways to more effectively address the health needs of Indigenous Peoples in Saskatchewan. A critical advancement for the college, led by the OVDIH, is a permanent academic home for Indigenous health through the establishment of the [Department of Indigenous Health and Wellness](#) (DIHW). This Indigenous-led department serves as a safe, welcoming, and culturally grounded space for Indigenous health researchers, learners, faculty, and community. Established in 2023 and guided by Indigenous leadership and community voices, the department is dedicated to advancing health and wellness for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples through education, research, mentorship, and authentic community engagement. The department is the [first of its kind in Canada](#) and offers the college and province opportunities to redefine health, creating space for traditional Indigenous health practices and Indigenous practitioners alike. Research of the department will be informed by Indigenous community needs, with reciprocity and relationship at the forefront of this work. Members of the DIHW, alongside Indigenous community members are currently in the process of co-creating Academic Grand Rounds for the department, which has been gifted the name miyo-pikiskwewin (speaking in a good way). The remaining work of the OVDIH and DIHW into the future remains focused on the establishment of Indigenous-led partnerships through respectful community engagement protocols that reflect the diversity of the population to ensure objectives related to Indigenous health are met and sustained.

The College has worked towards representation through dedicated seats for Indigenous students, dedicated student leadership opportunities, the establishment of Social Justice and Indigenous Community Councils, and the establishment of the OVDIH, DIHW, and additional staff positions (Indigenous Protocol & Relation Specialist, Indigenous Research Specialist, Indigenous Health Elective Coordinator, Indigenous Engagement Specialist, Regina Campus, Indigenous Initiatives Coordinator). In 2021, an EDI survey was administered, finding



The grand opening of miyo maskihkêwiyiniwak, the Good Medicine Good People Space, was celebrated in March 2024. Photos submitted

approximately 3% of respondents⁵ self-identified as Indigenous. The recent demographic assessment of the college found a substantially greater proportion of respondents self-identifying as Indigenous. An expansion of Indigenous-specific staffing has seen a shift in the work of the college to embody stewardship of knowledge, responsibility to land, and support of holistic health and wellbeing. Most recently is the introduction of a Knowledge Teacher in the college. Robert (Bob) Merasty was hired in the OVDIH, bringing a wealth of experience, relationships, and knowledge to the college. The integration of a Knowledge Teacher into the work of the college has led to recent lunch and learns being hosted on protocol and ceremony, as well as the introduction of monthly pipe ceremonies (available to all students, staff, and faculty).

Community-College Relationship & Reciprocity

The work of the college to foster community-college relations has uplifted the commitments of stewardship, safe spaces, and representation. The college has strengthened reciprocal and respectful relationships through a wide array of research relationships, as well as the establishment of two community councils that guide work through the OVDIH. The Social Justice Community Council and the [Indigenous Community Councils](#) were created in 2023/24, formalizing relationships with community members that represent diverse Saskatchewan communities, including Indigenous communities. Embedding this community guidance and voice to work of the college ensures that voices and knowledge of Indigenous people are both present and honored. Through the OVDIH's enduring commitment to authentic community engagement, reciprocity has been at the center of this formal relationship.

The college engages in meaningful, innovative, and long-term partnerships with Indigenous communities. Researchers and clinicians participate in collaborative and mutually beneficial partnerships aimed at improving the health of Indigenous people and communities in culturally appropriate ways, with relationships built over many years and with opportunities to learn with and from communities. In the School of Rehabilitation Science all research projects involving Indigenous people and communities follow community-specific protocols for relationship, reciprocity and ethical research. The Department of Oncology shared about their partnership with the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency on an initiative that improves access and care for Indigenous and northern communities, including a rapid access testing program for gastrointestinal cancers. They have also made progress where representation is concerned, successfully matching an Indigenous Oncology resident in 2025. The Remote Presence Technology (RPT) initiative, a first of its kind in Canada, is another example of innovative community partnership. This Hub is located on Whitecap Dakota First Nation and is supported by Northern Medical Services and the College of Medicine, in collaboration with the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies. A ceremony in celebrated the announcement of the Virtual Health Hub and in September 2025 construction of the building began. The initiative addressing inequities in HIV, hepatitis C and other sexually transmitted and blood borne infections (STBBI) develops partnerships with communities and community-based organizations to confront these disparities using Etuaptmumk (the two-eyed seeing approach).⁶ Etuaptmumk informs all aspects of the work, including partnership development, research design, knowledge generation, and the creation of policies and procedures. In the summer of 2025, researchers with Waniska hosted the “Rivers of Hope through Strength”, a community research gathering focused on STBBI prevention for Indigenous women. The gathering was attended by more than 70 participants from across the province, celebrating and centering traditional approaches to prenatal care and harm reduction. The Department of Community Health and Epidemiology has demonstrated leadership in its academic standards for tenure and promotion, ensuring that faculty are recognized for community-engaged work and service. These standards apply to all faculty, supporting Indigenous faculty to engage in Indigenous research methodologies while also embedding relationality in the work of all.

Prior to the creation of the university's Indigenous strategy, the College of Medicine has been home to the Cameco chair in Indigenous Health and Wellness. This research chair was established in 2017, with a [renewal](#)

⁵ This survey had an approximate response rate of 13% based on inviting 4,000 college members to participate.

⁶ Etuaptmumk (two-eyed seeing) was coined by Mi'kmaw Elder Albert Marshall from the Moose Clan of the Mi'kmaw Nation (Bartlett, Marshall, & Marshall, 2012; Tepi'ketuek Mi'kmaw Archives, 2013).

[announced in 2023](#). Through this research chair, [Pewaseskwan](#) (the Indigenous Wellness Research Group) was formed. This group brings traditional Indigenous knowledge and medicines to the forefront while supporting Indigenous communities to undertake their own health and wellness research. Pewaseskwan has been part of many successful partnerships with community, co-developing successful grants and projects to meet community-identified needs. Examples include, [supporting Nehiyawak \(Cree\) language and culture revitalization at Onion Lake Cree Nation](#) and [working with Key First Nation and Yorkton Tribal Council to examine heart disease and Kennedy's disease](#). In 2023, a [Tier 2 Canada Research Chair in Developmental Origins of Health and Disease in Indigenous People](#) was appointed to Dr. Wendie Marks, Department of Pediatrics, College of Medicine. The work of this research program focuses on the effects of intergenerational stress and malnutrition on the gut microbiome and how this relates to obesity in Indigenous children in Saskatchewan. The program is comprised of interdisciplinary and multi-stakeholder team members including, Indigenous Knowledge Keepers, persons with lived experience, Indigenous and non-Indigenous scientists, researchers, and clinicians. The College of Medicine's Department of Psychiatry is also the academic home of Dr. Holly Graham, a nurse, psychologist, and professor who holds an Indigenous Research Chair in Nursing. Dr. Graham's internationally recognized "CPR Racism" is a critical intervention into disrupting racism, which has also been adapted into a series of [health professionals' recruitment programming](#) by Futurum Careers.

Staff, Student, and Faculty Learning

The College of Medicine has implemented many opportunities for staff, faculty, and students to increase their awareness and cultural humility, uplift Indigenous Ways of Knowing, and honor people, land and knowledge. There is work underway to revise the Indigenous health content in the undergraduate medical education program. This work aims to have curricular alignment with the Indigenous Health Core Competencies, developed by the [National Circle for Indigenous Medical Education](#), with teaching and learning that moves beyond content delivery towards opportunities for connection, relationship, and experiential learning with community. This work visions a future that embeds Indigenous community and ways of knowing more fully into curriculum, understanding these as an integral component of physician training at USask. Changes in the near future include enhancements to the land-based learning experiences of first year students, with the land as our first teacher being embodied in these enhanced opportunities.

Within the undergraduate medical education program, learners have benefited greatly from the expansion of the Indigenous Health elective. Indigenous community partners are at the heart of this work, providing placements to learners across the province and taking an active role in teaching learners. The expansion of these electives uplifts the commitments of ohpahotân | oohpaahotaan, dedicating learner experiences to Indigenous health that is led by community and hosted in community. Work has been undertaken in the last five years to improve and formalize the compensation model for community partners, recognizing the time, resources, and knowledge that are used in contributing to the education of learners. Prior to the gifting of ohpahotân | oohpaahotaan, the [Making the Links - Global Health Certificate](#) was developed as a comprehensive, accredited program that prepares students with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to help them work competently with marginalized under-served communities locally and globally, drawing the connection of colonization and its impact on health inequities across communities and contexts. This certificate, housed within the Department of Community Health & Epidemiology, focuses on interactive, experiential, and didactic learning opportunities and is currently the only undergraduate certificate in global health in Canada. This continues to be a rich learning opportunity for learners in the college, providing an opportunity to build relationships, learn from community, and strengthen their future practice as a care provider. A reflection of student experience in this certificate can be read [here](#).

The College of Medicine has continuously invested in new ways of integrating Indigenous Ways of Knowing and being into core programming. Land acknowledgements and opening prayers are important components of our day-to-day work and the OVDIH offers guidance to college members who are interested in learning about appropriate cultural protocols when working with Indigenous partners. The Department of Surgery engages with Indigenous community partners each year for the opening of the Surgical Skills Lab, providing a grounding space and an opening smudge ceremony with students. An Indigenous studies pre-requisite has been

implemented as an admissions requirement of the medical doctor (MD) program, the Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS) program, and all three programs in the School of Rehabilitation Sciences. Beyond this pre-requisite, the MD program has aimed to embody wise practices in admissions through the Indigenous Admissions Circle, providing a culturally affirming and supportive environment for applicants. In the School of Rehabilitation Sciences there are two annual events focused on learning and reflection opportunities for students, staff, and faculty to learn about systemic racism, colonialism and the history of ongoing harm within Canada (i.e. Blanket Exercise, Anti-Racism Day). The course '[The Role of Practitioners in Indigenous Wellness](#)' is a collaborative project that was developed by the Division of Continuing Medical Education, College of Medicine, and the School of Rehabilitation Science. This course is supported by the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations with content created by Indigenous community members and scholars, some of whom are the online instructors. It is designed from an Indigenous worldview, delivered through the voices and stories of leaders in Indigenous health care. While this course was available prior to the gifting of ohpahotân | oohpaahotaan, it continues to be made available to all faculty at no cost and has more recently become mandatory for fourth year medical students and all residents in the college's post-graduate medical education program. A more recent opportunity, launched in 2021/21, is the course '[Building an Awareness of Cultural Humility](#)', developed by Continuing Medical Education and Continuing Education in Rehabilitation Science for non-provider, health services staff. The registration fee for this course is waived by the college for all interested staff. In addition to college-wide learning opportunities departments, such as Oncology and Surgery, have supported ongoing education related to Indigenous health, cultural safety, and reconciliation through presentations, grand rounds and other learning sessions.

In 2024, a dean's undergraduate summer research project was conducted to understand various perspectives (e.g., students, staff, faculty) on the application of Truth and Reconciliation Call #24 in medical education in the Saskatchewan context. Participants spoke to the importance of incorporating holistic and strengths-based approaches that balance traditional Indigenous medicine with Western medicine, emphasizing the detrimental impacts colonialism has had on the knowledge and practice of traditional Indigenous health. Participants also highlighted the importance of engaging Indigenous Elders, knowledge keepers, healers, physicians and other Indigenous experts to ensure that Indigenous health content remains relevant and respectful, and to support the ongoing evolution of the UGME program. This project provided important reflections and learnings for future progress of the college.

The efforts of the college to provide cultural competency training to healthcare professionals is contributing to a more positive and supportive environment for Indigenous students, with the IPAC Medical School Report Card finding that student experiences and perspectives moved in a positive direction between 2021/22 and 2023/24. While student responses were varied on the work that has been done to provide cultural competency training, the majority of respondents indicated that they considered educators to be allies, that they felt safe when attending Indigenous cultural safety training and that racism from non-Indigenous classmates or educators was rare. While this report has likely not captured all the curriculum advancements and expanded opportunities for staff and faculty to learn and reflect, a list is provided in Appendix A.

CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTATION

As the College of Medicine celebrates achievements, advancements, and the Indigenous study story, it is imperative to highlight and interrogate challenges that have arisen throughout the implementation of the ohpahotân | oohpaahotaan strategy. Challenges were identified across the multiple sources of evidence used in this report.

Efforts to identify and reflect on these challenges enable the college to be accountable to our Indigenous colleagues, staff, students, faculty, and communities, now and into the future. In this way, the challenges identified here are directly reflected in the recommendations and plans for the future, outlined in the next section.

Staff Recruitment & Retention

The recruitment and retention of Indigenous faculty and staff continue to be a priority for the College of Medicine. To meet its social accountability mandate, the College of Medicine has identified targeted diversity outcomes for key groups: Indigenous peoples, rural and remote residents, socioeconomically disadvantaged individuals, women, and visible minorities. These outcomes aim to ensure that the student body, faculty, and staff reflect the demographic composition and diversity of Saskatchewan, as reported in the 2021 Canadian Census. To achieve this goal the college will pursue a 10% increase in representation for each group every two years until the targets are met. Results from a 2025 OVDIH questionnaire indicated that 4.6% of faculty respondents and 7.2% of staff respondents self-identified as Indigenous. As the census reports Indigenous people comprising 17% of Saskatchewan's population there is opportunity to better understand factors contributing to attrition.

Intentional & Strategic Engagement Limited

Since the implementation of the ohpahotân | oohpaahotaan strategy there has been a low level of intentional, strategic engagement and commitment by various levels of college leadership in past 5 years. While some units within the college have pursued initiatives and reporting at an individual level, there has previously not been a comprehensive review of the strategy's implementation. There has been no unit or committee responsible for widespread implementation of the strategy which has contributed to a piecemeal approach.

Sense of Belonging

Nurturing authentic relationship requires time and resources. While some Indigenous students in the college are well connected to formal and informal resources through their programs, others are more isolated and may remain unaware of available supports. As there are no formal communication pathways for Indigenous students, staff, or faculty, members of the college often rely on word of mouth and shoulder-tapping to share opportunities. As the college expands, learners outside of Saskatoon may feel distant from the central campus' initiatives and supports. Roles like the Indigenous Coordinator, Regina Campus are one solution to increase sense of belonging. Establishing a formal communication network will be a positive contributor to deepening sense of belonging and engaging with all Indigenous members of the college. Additionally, some units have indicated that institutional program timelines (grant deadlines, short semesters, etc.) limit time required to build meaningful trusting relationships with community. This work requires sustained engagement, listening, and reciprocity, which can take longer than traditional program timelines allow. As a result, some college members may not engage or may not offer high quality engagements.

College Structure

The breadth of programs and schools within the college, including unique curricula, accreditation standards, many senior leaders, and >2,200 faculty all contribute to a complex organizational structure. In addition to the size and complexity of the college, many of our students also operate in a shared learning environment between the University of Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Health Authority. Internally and externally, there are inconsistent and complex communication channels and messaging, which become increasingly ineffective when staff or faculty leave roles, or new members join the college.

Evaluation & Monitoring

Evaluation and monitoring are two of the most important components of any transformative organizational change. While the college does engage in some monitoring (i.e. Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) measurements completed longitudinally for UGME students and a sample of faculty or the 2025 OVDIH questionnaire), more comprehensive data are required. Additionally, there are nuances in analyzing some of the impacts of college-level changes, such as the renewal of the Indigenous Admissions Pathway as this change coincided with the implementation of the Indigenous Truth Policy. Interpretation must recognize the potential for misattributing impacts from one policy implementation to the other when comparing admission statistics.



Annual Certificate in Global Health Community Liaison gathering. Photo by David Stobbe

THE FUTURE

Recommendations

Our journey in ohpahotân | oohpaahotaan continues, and each day our story evolves. To ensure an evolution that upholds the commitments of the gift, we must be intentional in our efforts, humble in our path, and work in service to our communities with the constant reminder that all flourishing is mutual.

In order to achieve that vision and to address the challenges we've faced, 10 recommendations have been made. These recommendations are the next steps to advance the work of the College of Medicine and uplift the seven commitments of ohpahotân | oohpaahotaan, but they are not the end of our journey.

Recommendation #1: Implement a routine opportunity to gather feedback from Indigenous students.

- a) Gather data on sense of belonging, wellbeing, inclusion, and experience in order to better understand the impact of programs and policies on Indigenous students and to continue making improvements into the future.
- b) Create multiple modes of engagement, such as an anonymous survey and a sharing circle led by an Indigenous Elder.

Recommendation #2: Promote Indigenous staff and faculty flourishing by nurturing a sense of belonging and supporting equitable opportunities while actively combatting tokenism, isolation, and siloed work environments.

- a) Gather data on sense of belonging, safety, inclusion, and wellbeing (e.g., expand on current staff and faculty experiences surveys, annual focus groups, quarterly gatherings) to better understand experiences and make improvements into the future.
- b) Engage with Indigenous staff and faculty to identify persistent challenges, co-develop required supports, and monitor improvements over time related to retention, recruitment and promotion in the college.

Recommendation #3: Develop and enhance formal engagement and communications channels for Indigenous students, staff, and faculty to ensure consistent engagement, information sharing, data gathering, and support.

- a) Formalize an engagement approach that does not rely on self-identification utilizing an opt-in approach to identification through deybwewin | taapwaywin | tapwewin: Indigenous Truth policy.

Recommendation #4: Identify leadership to establish a committee with the mandate to:

- a) Monitor Indigenous student, staff, faculty, and community partner experience and success over time, and
- b) Address concerns related to the full realization of Indigenous success in the College of Medicine.

Recommendation #5: Continue to support integration of Indigenous communities and Ways of Knowing into curriculum

- a) Expand opportunities for land-based learning and learning in community, with value placed on building long-lasting and reciprocal relationships with community.

Recommendation #6: To support all learners in the college on their journey, ensure staff and faculty have the knowledge and skills to provide mentorship to required learning. To achieve this, implement the 2023/24 IPAC Medical School Report Card recommendations on TRC 23 (iii), including:

- a) working with Indigenous staff, students, and local leaders for guidance on how to improve the effectiveness of learning, such as Indigenous cultural training; and
- b) not making it mandatory for Indigenous students to attend sessions on the history of Indigenous peoples with their non-Indigenous classmates, but rather work with them to identify alternatives, such as cultural activities with an Elder or a cultural safety curriculum completed together in a safe space.

Recommendation #7: Design and implement a recruitment strategy for Indigenous students into the College of Medicine.

- a) Strengthen and formalize mentorship and support pathways to improve access for Indigenous students into all college programs:
- b) Increase the resources available to expand and/or enhance current initiatives that engage youth and communities;
- c) Formalize collaborative partnerships with current programs, such as Building Intercultural Resilience Mentorship (BIRM) and the Indigenous Summer Institute through the Office of the Vice-Provost Indigenous Engagement (OVPIE).
- d) Identify collaborative partnerships with other post-secondary institutions, community partners, Education Secretariats and other Indigenous portfolio leaders

Recommendation #8: Identify opportunities to support community-college relationships that are authentic, reciprocal, and meet community needs, addressing current challenges such as compensation, student engagement, accountability mechanisms, and communication channels.

Recommendation #9: Incorporate tenure and promotion standards across the college that recognize diverse research methodologies, activities, and contributions, including that of community-engaged research.

- a) Look to the Department of Community Health and Epidemiology or DORA as models for robust and context-specific assessments of research.

Recommendation #10: Recognizing the continuing journey of this work and our commitment to current and future Indigenous staff, students, faculty, and community, appoint responsibility within the college for the ongoing oversight of engagement, implementation, and monitoring of ohpahotân | oohpaahotaan.

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APPENDIX A. PROGRAM AND POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

The program and policy highlights are presented within the four themes that were explored in this report. This list does not encompass the full breadth of work that has been done in the College of Medicine but is based on the information and data that was provided at the time this report was completed.

Student Pathways, Mentorship, and Leadership

- Indigenous Admission Circle (up to 20 dedicated seats)
- wakohtowin Indigenous Mentorship Program (2020)
- Indigenous Medical Student Association of SK (formed in 2022 and ratified in 2023)
- SRS Indigenous Admission Seats
 - Master of Physical Therapy (up to 8 dedicated seats)
 - Master of Occupational Therapy (up to 8 dedicated seats)
 - Master of Speech-Language Pathology (up to 8 dedicated seats)
- Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS) Holistic Admissions Process
- Wardman Scholarship

Space, Staffing, and Leadership

- Office Vice-Dean Indigenous Health
- Department of Indigenous Health and Wellness
- miyo maskihkêwiyiniwak, Good Medicine People Space
- Indigenous specific spaces in School of Rehabilitation Sciences expansion
- The College of Medicine has 10 Indigenous specific staff positions:
 - Senior Lead, Indigenous Initiatives and Programming
 - Indigenous Initiatives Coordinator, School of Rehabilitation Science
 - Indigenous Coordinator, Regina Campus (2021)
 - Vice-Dean Indigenous Health (new in 2022)
 - Indigenous Health Elective Coordinator (new in 2023)
 - Associate Professor, Community Health & Epidemiology (new in 2025)
 - Indigenous Protocol & Relation Specialist (new in 2025)
 - Indigenous Research Specialist (new in 2025)
 - Executive Assistant, Office Vice-Dean Indigenous Health (new in 2026)
 - Assistant Professor, School of Rehabilitation Science (new in 2026)

Community-College Relationship & Reciprocity

- Indigenous Community Council to guide our work
- Social Justice Community Council to guide our work
- Expanded relationships with Indigenous Health Elective Sites
- Compensation model for Indigenous Health elective
- Indigenous-led Virtual Health Hub, Whitecap Dakota First Nation
- Collaborative research models
- Community-specific protocols for relationship, reciprocity, and ethical research
- istotamawin Circle (formally the Indigenous Engagement Working Group), School of Rehabilitation Sciences
- Community Health & Epidemiology revised tenure and promotion standards

Staff, Student, and Faculty Learning

Curriculum Advancements

- Indigenous Health Electives Expansion
- Community-Based Learning (UGME YR 1)
- Building an Awareness of Cultural Humility (UGME YR 4)
- Indigenous Health Retreat at Wanuskewin (CH&E)
- Indigenous Wellness Training (PHPM)
- Orientation materials for students (CH&E)
- Mapping of curriculum in the CH&E department
- Opening smudge ceremony and grounding space in Surgical Skills Lab opening (Dept. Surgery)

Expanded Opportunities for Staff and Faculty to Learn & Reflect

- Indigenous Strategy Committee
- Physicians for the Future: Anti-Racism Training for Physicians (Continuing Medical Education)
- Building an Awareness of Cultural Humility (Continuing Medical Education)
- The Role of Practitioners in Indigenous Wellness (Continuing Medical Education)
- EDI Moments, Medicine & Society Committee
- Reconciliation Circles
- Grand Rounds

Requirements of Applicants into College Program

- Indigenous studies course pre-requisite for all applicants into MD Program, School of Rehabilitation programs, and Master of Physician Assistant Studies program

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