



INDIGENIZATION  
STRATEGY

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



Assiniboine Community College campuses are located on the traditional territories of Treaty No. 1 and Treaty No. 2, and the shared traditional lands of Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, Dene and Anishinabek/Ojibwe peoples, and the homeland of the Métis nation.

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Assiniboine has a proud and extensive history of working with Indigenous communities and organizations throughout Manitoba. This Indigenization Strategy builds on that history with a unified and focused approach for our future.

Our mission of transforming lives and strengthening Manitoba through applied education and research is central to the work that we do. One of the guiding pieces of our college's Strategic Direction is to contribute to First Nation, Metis and Inuit prosperity by having the highest college participation rate in the province.

Undoubtedly, in order to achieve this, and to contribute to reconciliation, we know there is more work to be done. This strategy provides a framework for us to mobilize college practices to deliver results, particularly in the areas of student success, community engagement, and social & economic impact.

This plan also serves as a public commitment that we will continue to build on our existing partnerships and grow new ones in the spirit of collaboration, understanding and progress. We look forward to this journey.

Mark Frison  
*President, Assiniboine Community College*



## PROCESS

This strategy document began as an Aboriginal recruitment and retention strategy reflecting on current barriers to student success, what success looks like, and what needs to be done to remove barriers. Three surveys were conducted and eight focus groups with Indigenous students at our Victoria Avenue East, North Hill and Parkland campuses as well as with 32 faculty and staff. Finally, working closely with our external partners and communities we gathered community perspectives from:

- Manitoba Metis Federation (Brandon and Dauphin Regions)
- United Native Friendship Centre (Brandon and Dauphin)
- Brandon School Division
- Mountain View School Division
- Sioux Valley Dakota Nation
- Rolling River First Nation
- Skownan First Nation
- Ebb & Flow First Nation
- Dakota Ojibway First Nation Education
- CEYUS Brandon Inc.
- Workplace Education Manitoba
- Brandon Urban Aboriginal Peoples' Council
- Prairie Mountain Health
- Manitoba Government – Workforce Development (Brandon and Dauphin)

From the feedback, it was clear the college should look beyond a focus on Aboriginal recruitment and retention in order to achieve our strategic goals. In the spring of 2016, many senior leaders from Assiniboine Community College, Indigenous staff, and other key staff gathered in a sharing circle to discuss indigenization strategy. As a result, this document articulates how we will engage further with Indigenous communities, and how we will advance our educational commitments to reconciliation through indigenization. The key to moving this strategy forward will be the cooperation of all staff and faculty at Assiniboine Community College.



## COLLEGE CONTEXT FOR INDIGENIZATION STRATEGY



### **CICAN INDIGENOUS PROTOCOL**

Colleges and Institutes Canada signatory institutions to this protocol recognize and affirm their responsibility and obligation to Indigenous education.

### **MB INDIGENOUS BLUEPRINT**

Manitoba Collaborative Indigenous Education Blueprint For Universities and Colleges: Making Excellence in Indigenous Education a Priority.

### **BUPAC COMMITMENT OF PARTICIPATION**

An MOU establishes the commitment between Brandon Urban Aboriginal Peoples Council and the City of Brandon (collectively, the Parties) to promote Aboriginal education, employment, and business inclusion within the community.

### **ACC INDIGENIZATION STRATEGY**

A strategy encompassing ACC's commitment of the Truth & Reconciliation's calls to action on education in order to overcome the legacy of residential schools in Canada.

## OUR COMMITMENT

Assiniboine Community College recognizes the unique history of Indigenous peoples and is committed to playing an active role in reconciliation. Indigenous learners and communities are an important consideration in senior-level decision making and organizational planning.

We believe strongly in strengthening our partnerships with First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples through continued collaboration. Our college has a proud history of working with Indigenous communities and organizations across the province and this will continue to flourish. By making positive changes to reduce barriers to education and educational supports, we can empower Indigenous students to succeed.

ACC has an important role in helping to reducing the educational attainment and employment gaps that currently exist between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Increasing pathways for Indigenous learners will contribute to the success and prosperity of individuals, families, and communities while also addressing labour market demand and Manitoba's economic growth. With the support of provincial and federal governments, additional education opportunities extend beyond our campuses to training sites both on- and off-reserve.

Our campuses are located in Assiniboine Community College campuses are located on the traditional territories of Treaty No. 1 and Treaty No. 2, and the shared traditional lands of Cree,



Oji-Cree, Dakota, Dene and Anishinabek/Ojibwe peoples, and the homeland of the Métis nation. It is encouraged practice to acknowledge the history of these lands at formal events, ceremonies and presentations.

We foster an environment for all students to grow through the sharing of knowledge, perspectives and experiences. As both Indigenous peoples, and Canadians alike, grow to understand the impacts of colonialism and assimilation, we work at renewing relationships as we partner to change in education.

ACC is a proud signee of College and Institutes Canada's Indigenous Education Protocol for Colleges and Institutes. This document is based on seven principles that reaffirm the importance of Indigenous education and offer guidance on governance structures, student supports, participation rates and learning environments. The seven principles are:

1. Commit to making Indigenous education a priority.
2. Ensure governance structures recognize and respect Indigenous peoples.
3. Implement intellectual and cultural traditions of Indigenous peoples through curriculum and learning approaches relevant to learners and communities.
4. Support students and employees to increase understanding and reciprocity among Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.
5. Commit to increasing the number of Indigenous employees with ongoing appointments, throughout the institution, including Indigenous senior administrators.
6. Establish Indigenous-centred holistic services and learning environments for learner success.
7. Build relationships and be accountable to Indigenous communities in support of self-determination through education, training and applied research.

In December 2015, the college joined other education institutions from across the province to sign the historic Indigenous Education Blueprint. The Blueprint takes action on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendations on education. Signatories commit to ten key priorities:

1. Engaging with Indigenous peoples in respectful and reciprocal relationships and to realize the right to self-determination, and to advance reconciliation, language and culture through education, research and skill development.
2. Bringing Indigenous knowledge, languages and intellectual traditions, models and approaches into curriculum and pedagogy.



3. Promoting research and learning that reflects the history and contemporary context of the lives of Indigenous peoples.
4. Increasing access to services, programs, and supports to Indigenous students, to ensure a learning environment is established that fosters learner success.
5. Collaborating to increase student mobility to better serve the needs of Indigenous students;
6. Building school and campus communities that are free of racism, value diversity and foster cultural safety.
7. Increasing and measuring Indigenous school and post-secondary participation and success rates.
8. Showcasing successes of Indigenous students and educators.
9. Reflecting the diversity of First Nations, Inuit and Métis cultures in Manitoba through institutional governance and staffing policies and practices.
10. Engaging governments and the private and public sectors to increase labour market opportunities for Indigenous graduates.

A central pillar in ACC's strategic direction is contributing to First Nation, Métis and Inuit prosperity by having the highest college participation rate in the province. Currently, 18 per cent of our student body identify as being First Nations, Métis or Inuit.

Education has a central responsibility in reconciliation across Canada. It is the view of Assiniboine Community College that we move forward together in unity with healthy dialogue, cultural respect, kindness and shared perspectives.

## **OUR STRATEGY**

Assiniboine Community College campuses are located on the traditional territories of Treaty No. 1 and Treaty No. 2, and the shared traditional lands of Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, Dene and Anishinabek/Ojibwe peoples, and the homeland of the Métis nation. This, in itself, signifies the diversity and complexity of the Indigenous communities in our province. The Indigenization strategy described in this document reflects these complexities and Assiniboine Community Colleges' commitment to reconciliation; the decolonization of education at the post-secondary level; our obligations to CIG's Aboriginal Protocol, Manitoba's Collaborative Indigenous Education Blueprint, the MOU with the Brandon Urban Aboriginal People's Council; and our engagement to ensure Indigenous student success.



## **OUR DEFINITION OF INDIGENIZATION**

Indigenization is a commitment to a process of instilling Indigenous worldviews, knowledge, beliefs, ways of doing and being from the diverse Indigenous cultures we are united with, into our organization at every level in all things including academics, organizational/operational structures as well as within all our social/cultural aspects.

In order to redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission makes a number of calls to action through education.

Indigenization seeks to instill competency through the acknowledgement and respect of Indigenous cultures while decolonizing our institution for the betterment of Indigenous lives and the rest of humanity.

Indigenization is about removing the existing barriers that lead to the success of Indigenous as well as all students.



## OUR INDIGENIZATION GOALS

There are three broad goals for indigenization:

### 1. STUDENT SUCCESS

- Indigenous students will achieve their educational goals through self-determination and graduate with a vision for meno bimadizewin,<sup>1</sup> mino-pimantiziwin,<sup>2</sup> ghuhnzuhn eghenai,<sup>3</sup> wiconi waste.<sup>4</sup>
- Indigenous students will feel welcomed, safe, and a sense of belonging.
- Indigenous students experience a respectful and engaging learning environment.
- A greater number of Indigenous learners will come to ACC as their first choice.
- We will develop culturally sensitive and academically successful programs for Indigenous students, and support students in regular programs through culturally relevant support services.
- We will increase student access to Indigenous cultural services and academic supports for Indigenous students.
- We will imbed Indigenous practices, ideas and principles in academic practices.

#### Indicators of success:

- » Increased enrolment of Indigenous students
- » Increased completion rates of Indigenous students
- » Increased satisfaction of Indigenous students
- » Increased graduation rates of Indigenous students

### 2. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- We will develop stronger ties to Indigenous communities in support of their community development objectives.
- We will work collaboratively with Indigenous communities to ensure improved access for students who wish to study.

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<sup>1</sup> Anishinaabeg language meaning “a good life”

<sup>2</sup> Oji-Cree language meaning “a good life”

<sup>3</sup> Dene language meaning “a good life”

<sup>4</sup> Dakaota language meaning “a good life”





- We will participate in indigenous community events in order to strengthen our relationships and our connectedness.
- We will bring learning opportunities to communities for those who prefer to learn in the community.
- We will celebrate Indigenous culture, history and knowledge.

**Indicators of success:**

- » Increased academic programming partnerships and collaborations with Indigenous communities, organizations, and institutions
- » Increased number of graduates trained in Indigenous communities
- » Increased Indigenous community member participation in college planning activities
- » Increased visibility of the college in Indigenous communities and events

**3. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT**

- We will contribute to improved prosperity for Indigenous individuals, families, and communities.
- We will contribute critical skills in cultural competency to the labour market in Manitoba.
- We will contribute applied research that contributes to Indigenous education, prosperity and well being.

**Indicators of success:**

- » Improved graduate outcomes for Indigenous students
- » Improved participation in adult upgrading programs
- » Increased number of Indigenous employees, particularly faculty
- » Increased employee cultural competency
- » Increased applied research contributing to Indigenous prosperity and well-being



## CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR 2016 – 26

### EDUCATION FOR RECONCILIATION

**Curriculum:** It is important to support the reconciliation process by supporting the development of Indigenous and culturally supportive curricula for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. These include new language programs and Indigenous education courses, as well as creating relevant, Indigenous content for our current courses, in all academic areas. Program review will include reviewing progress toward the indigenizing of programs. We will explore common core learning outcomes and learning objects aimed at reconciliation.

**Teaching and Learning:** Culturally responsive strategies require new skills and strategies, as we address evolving priorities in teaching and learning. We will cultivate these through professional development and new approaches to teaching support. We will seek out advice and support in Indigenizing teaching to cultivate improved outcomes, examine opportunities for co-teaching with Indigenous people, and develop teaching resources for instructors. We will review the college's library collection and other learning materials in light of indigenization objectives.

**Academic Oversight:** Imbedding indigenization objectives in academic processes is critical to shift teaching and learning over time. To promote the inclusion of diverse parties in the process of academic program oversight, the college will include local Indigenous educators, Elders, students, Indigenous alumni, and community members in program development, review, and advisory processes in order to reflect the priorities, interests, concerns and experiences of local Indigenous people.

**Access Programs:** To redress the education barriers faced by Indigenous students due to the legacy of colonization and assimilation, we will develop more opportunities with clearer and flexible pathways for Indigenous students to gain required college readiness and success skills through access programming. We will focus on learning conditions and approaches that support effective and culturally responsive teaching, given the specific literacy and pedagogical challenges facing Indigenous adult-upgrading learners.

**Community Programs:** To fulfill our mission and mandate, we will develop programs that respond specifically to identified needs of Indigenous communities, including those that support economic and social development and lead toward community sustainability and individual growth.



**Student Services:** It is important that the college provides safe affirming spaces on all campuses in which students can feel a sense of belonging and find support for transitioning into college academics, career development, leadership skills, personal growth, and culturally relevant support, with others, who share similar experiences as Indigenous peoples. We will monitor Indigenous student experiences with a view to ensuring appropriate support.

**Funding:** Government policy and limited financial options for Indigenous learners and their families create unique pressures and constraints on individual and community success. We will provide support for positive change through government relations, contract training, and fundraising for enhancing opportunities through student financial aid.

## **PROTOCOLS AND VISIBLE INCLUSION**

**Traditional Territories Acknowledgement:** Acknowledging territory is the beginning of cultivating strong relationships. Acknowledging territory shows recognition of and respect for Indigenous Peoples presence both in the past and the present. Recognition and respect are essential elements of establishing healthy, reciprocal relations. These relationships are key to reconciliation, a process to which ACC is committed. At ACC, college representatives and members will acknowledge the First Peoples on whose traditional territories we live and work. This acknowledgement appropriately takes place at events including awards/graduation ceremonies, luncheons, celebrations and announcements.

**Policy Framework:** It is necessary that we have policies to support and enable indigenization objectives. We need to review our policies to ensure that they are supportive and sensitive to Indigenous cultures. New policies need to be developed to advance Indigenization, including policies supportive of respectful relationships with Elders, drummers and Traditional Knowledge Keepers, Indigenous protocols, use of medicines, the removal of barriers, and a policy response on integrating Indigenous knowledge into college learning outcomes.

**Cultural Competence:** It is necessary that we work toward being culturally competent by having all staff display consistent behaviours and attitudes reflective of professionals of our institution while working effectively in cross-cultural situations. We are committed to supporting increased cultural competence in working with Indigenous coworkers, communities and students. Cultural competence includes (a) awareness of our own cultural worldviews, (b) positive attitudes towards cultural differences, (c) knowledge of different cultural practices and worldviews, and (d) cross-cultural skills. Improved cultural competence results in an ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across cultures. An



increased level of knowledge about indigenization, colonization, and residential schools is a good foundation.

**Importance of Place and Space:** Whether on campus or off campus, it is vital to create a culturally sensitive and culturally responsive environment. We need to take responsibility for the impact that the built environment has on student and employee experiences and work to ensure that our campus and online spaces reflect Indigenous voices and perspectives. To redress the impact of residential schools on Indigenous student success, we will create safe spaces for Indigenous student gatherings and ceremonies regardless of the location of our programs. This includes ensuring a warm and welcoming environment through visible expressions of Indigenous cultures in our halls, offices and learning rooms, and languages. Our goal is to create physical and cyber college spaces that reflect Indigenous peoples' histories, contributions, languages and diversities. A significant art installation, tipis, and dedicated teaching and gathering spaces at each permanent campus should be a goal in addition to ensuring that future building developments incorporate Indigenous design and aesthetics to balance the campus visual identities.

**Gatherings and Ceremonies:** Gatherings and ceremonies occupy a particular importance in supporting indigenization. We will develop more culturally responsive celebrations and welcoming events targeted to support recruitment and retention of students and celebrate annual successes and the graduation of students, and the improvement of community engagement. Indigenous alumni recognition also offers opportunity for both role modelling and positive community relations. Appropriate space for gathering and for ceremony is critical to visibly demonstrate commitment, recognition and support for indigenization. This includes respectful permanent and culturally appropriate teaching spaces for traditional knowledge keepers, and safe spaces for Indigenous students who are studying off reserve to find comfort and solace from environmental stress.

**Communications and Marketing:** A sense of belonging and improved visibility will be cultivated through purposeful review of college materials, on campus and on line. We will increase the level of communications and representations of Indigenous student success over time, including profiles of role models and career options. Increased use of media provides the opportunity to engage with students and communities who might not normally receive print materials, and can cultivate youth audiences. Purposeful inclusion of Indigenous imagery, people, and culture will help shape the overall college messages. A focus on elementary and middle school Indigenous schools will be a growing area of outreach.



## CHANGING THE DIALOGUE THROUGH ENGAGEMENT

We will:

- Create formal opportunities for dialogue at the institutional level between senior leadership and Indigenous community leaders and Elders on achieving improved engagement with Indigenous communities and partners.
- Create formal opportunities for dialogue at the program and school level on how to increase Indigenous content and relevance in programs and courses and develop plans to do so.
- Create formal opportunities for dialogue at the faculty level to collaborate with Indigenous faculty and community members to increase student exposure to Indigenous worldviews and role models.
- Create formal opportunities for dialogue at the employee level to create a new learning culture for all staff, faculty and students through professional development, special events and activities that contribute to a better understanding of Indigenous cultures and worldviews.
- Create formal opportunities for dialogue with key internal and external leaders and Indigenous community partners to help provide direction for the implementation of this indigenization strategy.

### WELCOME

Bienvenue • Tawow • Hau/han

Masih Nenueli • Tunga hogiti • Piihtikway

Kiwiishaamikoo • Miigwech bi-izhaayeg

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