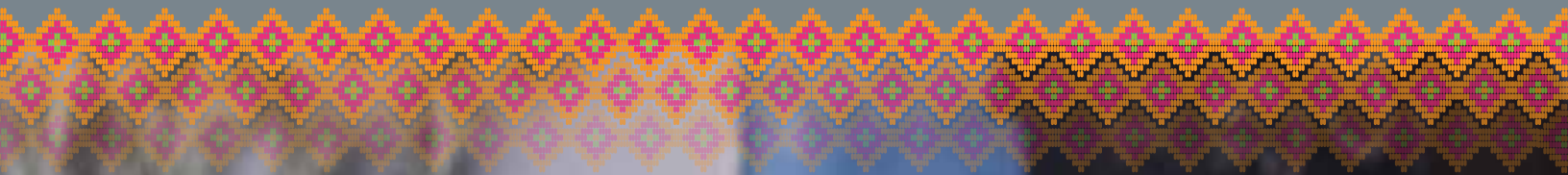


# Indigenous Student Success Strategy

2019-2020 Report





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## About Indigenous Student Success Strategy

**Situated on Treaty 4 and Treaty 6 territories and homeland of the Métis people, Saskatchewan Polytechnic is committed to the renewal of relationships — miyo wahkohtowin — with our Indigenous communities.**

For Saskatchewan Polytechnic, this means we must integrate Indigenous ways of being, knowing, teaching and learning in everything we do.

Saskatchewan Polytechnic is committed to ensuring all learners have an equal opportunity to succeed. In June 2018, the institution launched the Indigenous Student Success Strategy, which builds on the lessons and successes of the previous Aboriginal Student Achievement Plan. The goal of this strategy is to increase recruitment, retention, graduation rates and the overall success of Indigenous students across all programs. Indigenous students should feel welcome, inspired and empowered, but most of all they should feel like Saskatchewan Polytechnic is a place where they belong. Saskatchewan Polytechnic will continue to refine the strategy through frequent, ongoing consultation with a wide variety of Indigenous stakeholders, and integrating Indigenous philosophies, culture, knowledge and ways of learning into program curricula.

Indigenous students are an important part of Saskatchewan Polytechnic's community and make up 19 per cent of our student population.

This academic year we saw the departure of Jason Seright, Saskatchewan Polytechnic's Indigenous Strategy director. Over the six years that Seright was part of the Saskatchewan Polytechnic team, he provided vision, strategy and leadership in the ongoing commitment to Indigenous student success.

In March, 2020 Deanna Speidel was appointed interim Indigenous Strategy director. Speidel has been a part of Saskatchewan Polytechnic's Indigenous Strategy team for eight years.



**Indigenous Student Success Strategy launched in June, 2018.**

## Statistics & balanced report card results



**83 per cent of Indigenous graduates find employment**

(Note: The 2018-19 Graduate Follow-up Survey was conducted both before and after the COVID-19 situation had started. As such, it was likely negatively affected because of COVID-19).



**Saskatchewan Polytechnic has 3,203 Indigenous students who make up 19 per cent of our student population**



**Indigenous coordinators had 32,938 student appointments**



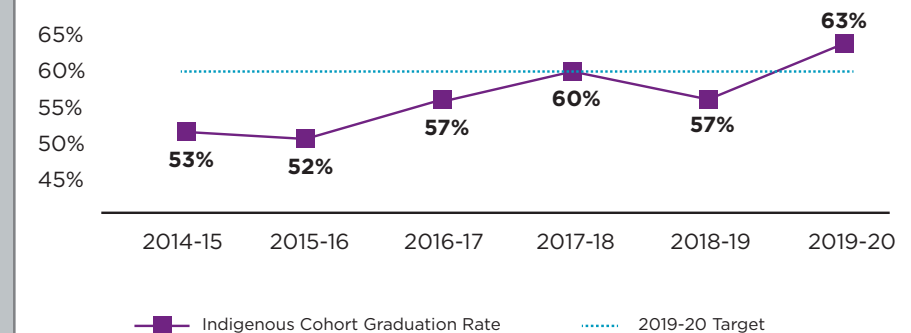
**Indigenous advisors had 11,631 student and other appointments and interactions**

**Indigenous Student Emergency Bursaries processed: 126 valued at \$62,480.**

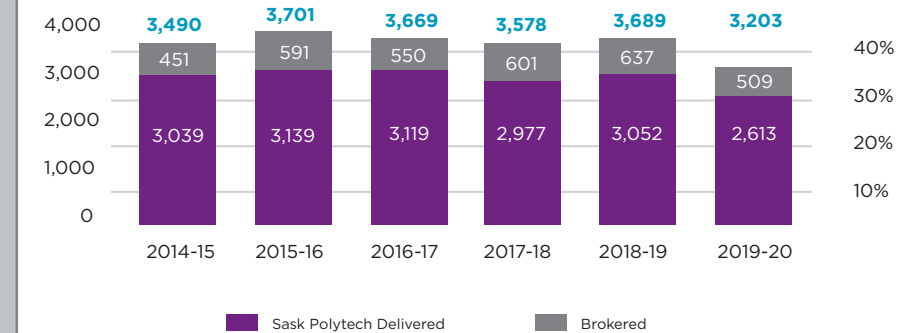
**Student Emergency Bursaries (COVID-19) processed for Indigenous students: 121, valued at \$60,500.**

**Emergency Bursaries (not designated for only Indigenous students) that were given to Indigenous Students: 77, valued at \$7,941.20.**

### INDIGENOUS COHORT GRADUATION RATE



### INDIGENOUS PROGRAM ENROLMENT



Source: 2019-20 Saskatchewan Polytechnic Annual Report

## Core functions and services

### Indigenous student advisors

Indigenous student success is fostered through the availability of dedicated student advisors. Indigenous student advisors cultivate relationships of support and are able to link students to services and supports as required. Student advisors help orient students to Saskatchewan Polytechnic and the community and connect students with outside resources and networks. They help students secure funding, housing, tutorial support, and budgeting and employment information. They also organize study groups and informational, social and cultural events.

Indigenous student advisors work with instructors, program heads and deans to help students achieve academic success in their chosen area of study. Advisors advocate for students in the event of misunderstandings and/or miscommunications with the goal of continuing positive relations between students and faculty. Advisors also present on Indigenous cultural and academic teachings and ways of knowing to further the understanding of Indigenous curriculum-building, understanding and good relations at Saskatchewan Polytechnic.

### Indigenous students' centres

Indigenous students' centres offer students a safe space to connect with Elders, knowledge keepers and cultural advisors who can provide academic, emotional and spiritual support. Saskatchewan Polytechnic has an Indigenous students' centre at each of our campus cities. These centres provide support to Indigenous students and help to ensure that their experience is the best it possibly can be. Each centre hosts a variety of cultural activities and events, provides a quiet space to study and a number of services including:

- Space to study and socialize
- Computers and kitchens to use
- Cultural, educational and recreational workshops and activities
- Smudging ceremonies
- Soup and bannock lunches

Centres are open from Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

### Summer Transition Program

The Summer Transition Program is a week-long event available to all Indigenous students registered for Saskatchewan Polytechnic programs beginning in the fall term. The program is designed to help students prepare for life in Saskatchewan Polytechnic campus communities. It is also an early opportunity to address any issues that may present as barriers for success. The program helps students address matters such as securing housing and setting up utilities, getting bank accounts set up, finalizing funding arrangements, and arranging childcare and school enrolment for children.

Through this program, students participate in cultural exploration/information, personal skill development workshops, academic assessment and support, and peer group building activities. There is no registration or application fee for students to participate.

### Financial support

Saskatchewan Polytechnic offers financial support to Indigenous students through a number of scholarships and bursaries. Saskatchewan Polytechnic has also established an emergency fund for students requiring financial assistance to help manage unforeseen issues that can otherwise present as barriers to students' success in learning. Emergency bursaries are intended to provide short-term financial assistance to students of Indigenous ancestry and are valued up to \$500.

### Tutor Your Way to Success

Indigenous Strategy at Moose Jaw campus partnered with Learning Services and the Department of Arts and Sciences to provide in-house tutoring for post-secondary math, statistics and accounting three times a week for three hours each session. The program was a great success and feedback from both instructors and students was positive. Many thanks to the tutors and instructors for their ongoing commitment in supporting Indigenous student success.



## Projects

### Indigenous role model calendar

Continuing to put students' needs first, the Indigenous Student Success Strategy guides efforts to ensure students can see themselves and their culture reflected throughout the institution. To this end, Indigenous role models are featured throughout institutional publications as an important way for students and prospective students to be inspired to pursue and realize their educational and career goals at Saskatchewan Polytechnic.

Saskatchewan Polytechnic includes Indigenous language in Indigenous Student Success Strategy marketing materials including: Cree, Dakota, Lakota, Nakota, Denesuline, Michif and Nakawe.

Indigenous role model photos and stories are shared in our annual calendar, on our website and on social media. Saskatchewan Polytechnic currently has 57 role model stories on the website and counting. Each success story includes information on the student's program, hometown, if they are Métis or First Nations and band.

### Tobacco box

Indigenous Strategy branded tobacco boxes were created as a thank you gift to provide to Elders that bring greetings to Saskatchewan Polytechnic events. The tobacco boxes include the following Indigenous languages on them: Cree, Dakota, Denesuline, Michif and Nakawe.

### Holiday cards

This December Saskatchewan Polytechnic created digital holiday cards for faculty and staff to share with their contacts. This included an Indigenous holiday card that included the following Indigenous languages: Cree, Dakota, Lakota, Nakota, Denesuline, Michif and Nakawe.

### Curricula Indigenization

Saskatchewan Polytechnic has undertaken efforts to indigenize program instruction and curricula, consistent with the Academic Model. Saskatchewan Polytechnic is endeavouring to integrate Indigenous content into all programs by 2023 as part of the Indigenous Student Success Strategy.

As efforts move forward toward indigenization of program curricula, it is important to note Call to Action 62-ii:

*We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Indigenous peoples, and educators to: Provide the necessary funding to postsecondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms.*

(Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action, 2015).



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1. Indigenous role model calendar
2. Indigenous role model social media
3. Tobacco box
4. Holiday cards

## Human resources projects

Although these are not Indigenous Student Success Strategy projects, they are initiatives the Indigenous Strategy team supports and helps promote within the Saskatchewan Polytechnic community.

### Teaching Reconciliation with 4 Seasons of Reconciliation

All Saskatchewan Polytechnic faculty and staff are now able to access an online certificate program in 4 Seasons of Reconciliation, a multimedia educational resource that provides a grounding in the history and contemporary realities of Indigenous People in Canada. The goal is to teach reconciliation in a non-threatening way. The four portals offer different learning opportunities for staff, faculty and students to begin or continue on their learning journey.

### Representative workforce initiatives

A continued emphasis on the development of a representative workforce is one of Saskatchewan Polytechnic's strategic priorities. Saskatchewan Polytechnic has put in place a number of initiatives to welcome and actively recruit members of groups that are under-represented in our workforce. These initiatives include, but are not limited to:

- Indigenous Awareness Training to ensure Saskatchewan Polytechnic is able to provide an inclusive and welcoming environment for Indigenous employees.
- Representative Workforce Agreements to actively display our commitment.
- A Self-Declaration Process to measure our success in moving toward a representative workforce.
- Representative Workforce Commitment Statement which is included in all advertisements and postings.
- Diversity and Inclusion Leadership Council to assist in the development of plans to allow Saskatchewan Polytechnic to move closer to a representative workforce. Their work includes the development of a Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Map.

## Events and celebrations

### Prince Albert Indigenous Relay Challenge: September 2019

Saskatchewan Polytechnic's Indigenous Relay Challenge is celebrated as part of the fall equinox celebration. During the Indigenous Relay Challenge teams of 10 carry a baton through nine legs of the relay. The timed challenge starts with a long distance run. Two team members must then paddle across the river and back in a canoe. The baton is passed through three separate legs of the race. The last runner passes the baton to a bicyclist. The baton is then passed to a runner carrying a heavy pack. This is followed by a log cutting challenge. The final leg is a fire starter event in which competitors have to bring water to a rolling boil using kindling, matches, a bottle of water and a tin can.

### Orange Shirt Day: September 30, 2019

On September 30, 2019, Saskatchewan Polytechnic hosted Orange Shirt Day in honour of residential school survivors.

The timing of this event holds historical significance, as it was typically the time of year when children were taken from their homes to attend residential schools. This day provides an opportunity for community members to convene in the spirit of reconciliation and hope. The Saskatchewan Polytechnic community was encouraged to wear orange. Indigenous Strategy handed out orange shirts.

### Scholarly visit from Sergeant Kairau, New Zealand Police Service: October 2019

Sergeant Simon Kairau presented at Prince Albert Campus on October 3, 2020. Sergeant Kairau is a District Alternative Resolutions coordinator for the New Zealand Police Service. Sergeant Kairau shared with Saskatchewan Polytechnic students, faculty and staff his experiences and knowledge around navigating cultural issues and improving police relationships with the Māori, the Indigenous Polynesian people of New Zealand. During his time in Saskatchewan he also met with several First Nations chiefs.

### CICan Indigenous Education Symposium: November 4-6, 2019

Saskatchewan Polytechnic volunteered to co-host the CICan Indigenous Education Symposium along with Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies and Gabriel Dumont Institute. The program featured the importance of international collaboration and dialogue around Indigenous language, as well as many other topics related to Indigenous education. The event took place in Saskatoon Nov. 4-6, 2019 and was attended by over 250 national and international delegates.

### Louis Riel Day: November 15, 2019

On November 15, 2019 Saskatchewan Polytechnic raised the Métis flag at our four main campuses in recognition of Louis Riel Memorial Day. This day celebrates the life of Louis Riel, a Canadian politician who represented the Métis peoples' interests.



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5. Prince Albert relay challenge social media

6. Orange Shirt Day social media

### Holiday luncheons and holiday hampers: December 2019

The Indigenous Strategy team held a holiday luncheon and party at each campus in December 2019. Students were provided with a holiday meal, door prizes and holiday hampers. Staff donated food and monetary gifts to help make the events a success. Faculty and staff also volunteered to prep and serve the meals for Indigenous students.

### Honour Ceremonies: March 2020

Since 1990, Saskatchewan Polytechnic honour ceremonies have recognized and celebrated students' hard work, dedication and achievements. Honour ceremonies are held in March each year, at each of the four campus locations. The ceremonies welcome Indigenous students and their family and friends. Elders and other members from students' communities attend the ceremonies. Guests hear success stories from current students and are able to enjoy the performance of an honour song. Indigenous role model alumni are often invited to attend and speak. Moose Jaw campus was honoured by the attendance of Lieutenant Governor Russel Mirasty who began the ceremony, speaking to the students about the importance of their decision to pursue post-secondary education. This year some of the honour ceremonies were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls: May 5, 2020

On May 5 Saskatchewan Polytechnic honoured Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit people. The Saskatchewan Polytechnic community was encouraged to wear red on May 5 and share photos on social media.

### National Indigenous Peoples Day: June 21, 2020

On Friday, June 19, Sask Polytech celebrated the heritage, cultures and outstanding achievements of our Indigenous community. Flags for Treaty 4, 6 and the Metis Nation were raised on each campus in recognition of National Indigenous Peoples Day. To ensure everyone's health and safety during the COVID-19 pandemic a schedule of events took place online through Zoom. Events included greetings from dignitaries such as National Chief Perry Bellegarde, Assembly of First Nations; Mary Culbertson, Treaty Commissioner of Saskatchewan; Amy Briley, Gabriel Dumont Institute, Métis Culture and Heritage / Scholarship Foundation program coordinator; Larry Rosia, Sask Polytech, president & CEO; and Deanna Speidel, Sask Polytech interim director, Indigenous Strategy. Other online events were led by Sask Polytech Indigenous Strategy staff that included: children's story time, pow wow fitness, traditional hand games, learn how to cook bannock, and Métis music with the Boyers.



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7. Holiday luncheons and holiday hampers

8. Honour Ceremony poster

9. National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls social media

## Community partnerships and outreach

Saskatchewan Polytechnic has fostered partnerships in support of the goals of the Indigenous Student Success Strategy. Initiatives and activities undertaken in 2019-2020 are summarized below.

### Indigenous community liaison

Saskatchewan Polytechnic has created a specialized Indigenous community liaison role to further the goals of the Indigenous Student Success Strategy. The Indigenous community liaison raises awareness of Saskatchewan Polytechnic in Indigenous communities throughout the province. This role was previously empty for a year and filled in December 2019.

### Indigenous strategy advisory committee

The Indigenous Student Success Strategy advisory committee is a multidisciplinary group of individuals that was formed in 2008. The advisory committee continues to guide strategy implementation, provide support to the institution's process of Indigenization and look for new ways to support Indigenous student success.

#### Committee Responsibilities

- Acts as champions for the Indigenous Student Success Strategy initiative;
- Receives regular updates on the progress of the initiative;
- Reviews and provides feedback on recommendations from initiative working committees;
- Discusses and provides input on issues that arise as part of the initiative implementation;
- Reviews and provides feedback on recommended strategies to address barriers to student recruitment and program completion; and
- Provides assistance with ongoing prioritization of initiative strategies and actions.

Committee members are appointed for a term of either two or three years to allow for planned replacement of committee members. Committee members may serve more than one term. A student representative is invited to all meetings.

### Alliance Pipeline Ltd. donation

Saskatchewan Polytechnic received a donation of \$200,000 from Alliance Pipeline Ltd. to use for the Indigenous Student Success Strategy. Monies will go towards the publication of the 2021 Indigenous Student Role Model Calendar and the new 2020-21 Indigenous Activity Book.

### Indigenous Leadership Program

The Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) has approached Saskatchewan Polytechnic for a partnership to offer Indigenous Leadership Training as a strategy to obtain qualified Indigenous candidates. Saskatchewan Polytechnic has a Leadership Skills Certificate program running through the Schools of Construction and Transportation. Building on this expertise, the Indigenous Leadership program will address a gap in Indigenous representation at the SHA between entry level and management. Proposed for the fall of 2020, the program will include six online modules at 30 hours each. Students work at their own pace. SHA has committed to 24 seats.

### James Smith Cree Nation partnership

In October 2019, James Smith Cree Nation, James Smith Cree Nation Medical Clinic and Saskatchewan Polytechnic signed an agreement to strengthen their relationships and explore opportunities to collaborate in academic, applied research and scholarly endeavours. This partnership will explore the possibility of delivering training programs for radiologic technologists and related fields at the James Smith Cree Nation Medical Clinic. The partnership may also build applied research capacity at the James Smith Cree Nation Medical Clinic involving radiology services. Applied research projects are completed by faculty and students to provide practical solutions to everyday problems.

### Skills Trade Awareness and Readiness (STAR) program

The Skills Trade Awareness and Readiness (STAR) program helps women, Indigenous peoples, newcomers and persons with disabilities start a career in the trades. The objective of the STAR program is to strengthen apprenticeship training systems to better support a skilled, inclusive, certified and productive trades workforce by improving the efficiency and effectiveness of training provided. Enrolment provides:

- Free tuition for chosen program or activities (seat fee applies to applied certificate and certificate programs).
- Free textbooks and/or required learning resources.
- Access to online course materials during the in-class learning journey.

This project is funded by the Government of Canada and has been suspended until further notice due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



# Expenditures

SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES RELATED TO CORE FUNCTIONS	
Salaries and benefits	\$ 1,412,723
Materials and supplies	\$ 50,883
Services	\$ 43,793
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 1,507,399</b>

## Scholarships and bursaries (updated)

In 2019-20, 679 awards totaling \$694,962.27 was disbursed to Indigenous students. In 2019-20, Saskatchewan Polytechnic allocated \$70,000 for Indigenous Student Emergency Bursaries; the total dispersed was \$62,480. These bursaries are intended to provide short-term financial assistance to students of Indigenous ancestry and are valued at up to \$500. In addition, a Saskatchewan Polytechnic COVID-19 emergency bursary program was created to help students overcome urgent financial emergencies due to the pandemic. These bursaries were dispersed in the form of one-time payments of \$500, regardless of any previous emergency bursaries received throughout the academic year. \$60,500 was allocated and dispersed to students of Indigenous ancestry.

## Detail of targeted and actual output and outcome success measures

Saskatchewan Polytechnic has identified outcomes to monitor as the Indigenous Student Success Strategy is implemented. These outcomes focus on increasing Indigenous student enrolment, retention and graduation as well as on indigenizing curriculum as per Saskatchewan Polytechnic’s Academic Model.

Outcomes and success are measured through the Indigenous balanced report card. The report card will be reviewed, updated and monitored over the course of this strategy (2019-2023). Results of the 2019-2020 Indigenous report card will be provided to the Ministry of Advanced Education in October 2020.

## Indigenous student enrolment, participation and graduation rates

Saskatchewan Polytechnic student data is compiled annually in mid-September for the preceding academic year, and as such, a subsequent submission with 2019-20 data will be produced for the Ministry of Advanced Education in October 2020 to meet this reporting requirement.

