

Indigenous Student Success Strategy

2020-2021 Report

SASKATCHEWAN
POLYTECHNIC



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About Indigenous Student Success Strategy

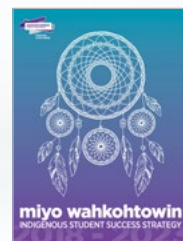
Situated on Treaty 4 and Treaty 6 territories and homeland of the Métis people, Saskatchewan Polytechnic is committed to the renewal of relationships — *miyo wahkohtowin* — with our Indigenous communities.

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.

In March 2020, Deanna Speidel was appointed to the position of interim director, Indigenous Strategy. Speidel has provided vision, strategy and leadership in the ongoing commitment to Indigenous student success.



Indigenous Student Success Strategy launched in June, 2018.



Statistics & balanced report card results



86 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 3,106 Indigenous students who make up 13 per cent of our student population



Indigenous coordinators had 4,602 student appointments

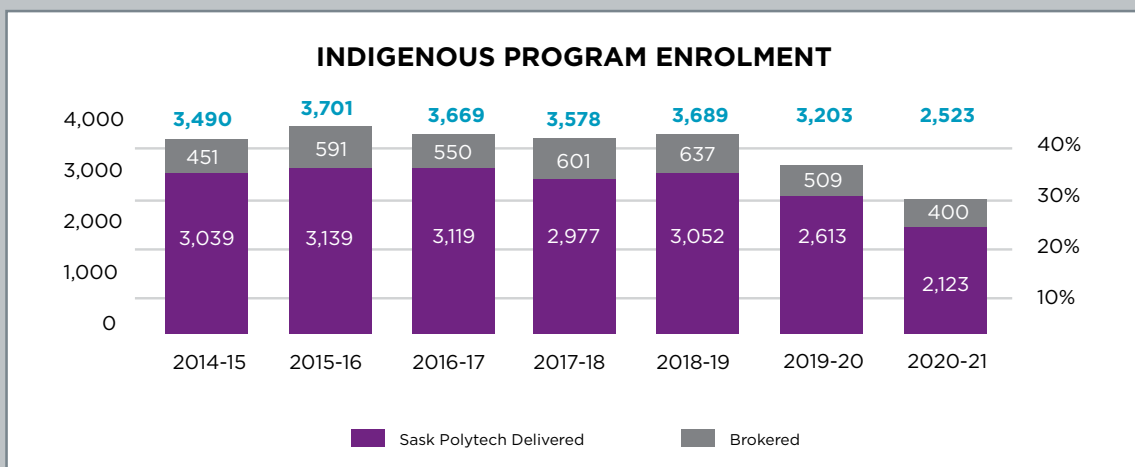
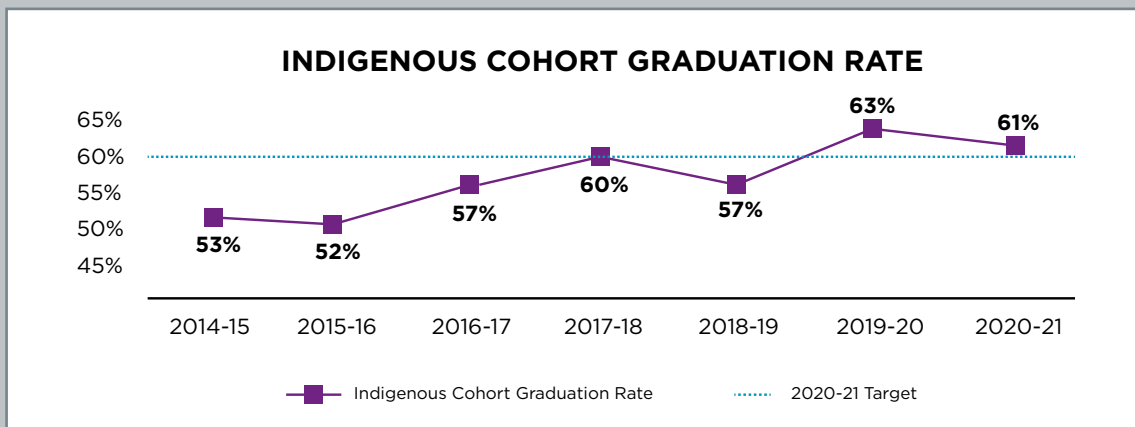


Indigenous advisors had 9,633 student and other appointments and interactions

Indigenous Student Emergency Bursaries processed (total): 338, valued at \$414,767.90.

Student Emergency Bursaries (COVID-19) processed for Indigenous students: six, valued at \$3,000.

Emergency Bursaries (not designated for only Indigenous students) that were given to Indigenous Students: 39, valued at \$19,500.



Source: 2020-21 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. During the pandemic drop-in Zoom rooms were scheduled for students to connect with an advisor for advice or answers to questions. 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.

Indigenous students' centres

During the pandemic the Indigenous students' centres were closed. Indigenous students' centre coordinators offered virtual consultations, access to Elders, drop-in chats and a variety of regular online events through Zoom and Facebook Live.

Indigenous students' centre coordinators offer students a safe space to connect with Elders, knowledge keepers and cultural advisors who can provide academic, emotional and spiritual support. These coordinators provide support to Indigenous students and help to ensure that their experience is the best it possibly can be.

Virtual Summer Transition Program

In 2020 the Summer Transition Program was held virtually via Brightspace, Saskatchewan Polytechnic's online learning environment. The Virtual Summer Transition Program is open to all Indigenous students registered for Saskatchewan Polytechnic courses. Organized by Indigenous student advisors, the online program is designed to help students prepare for student life. This program helps students build a firm foundation so that they can achieve their educational and career goals.

The Summer Transition Program provides help with financial literacy and finalizing funding arrangements. The virtual week-long program included:

- Cultural information
- Personal skill development workshops
- Academic assessment and support
- Peer group building activities

Students who successfully complete the Summer Transition Program may be eligible for financial incentives.

In 2020, 38 students participated and 36 received a second bursary in January — this means close to 95 per cent of these students are on track to successfully complete their programs.

Virtual Cree for Beginners

Indigenous students' centre coordinators arranged regular virtual events, including Cree for Beginners. These events were led by Elders and offered through regularly scheduled Zoom meetings and Facebook Live.

Virtual Men's Sharing Circle

A Men's Sharing Circle held online through Zoom began in October 2020. The circle is a place for men to share stories, build friendships and get support. It has been a consistently popular and well-attended group throughout the year.

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.

Virtual 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. This past academic year these events were held virtually due to the pandemic.

Indigenous land acknowledgement

Saskatchewan Polytechnic updated its boilerplate on all media releases and **saskpolytech.ca** webpages to include the Indigenous land acknowledgement.

Saskatchewan Polytechnic serves students through applied learning opportunities on Treaty 4 and Treaty 6 Territories and the homeland of the Métis people. Learning takes place at campuses in Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, Regina and Saskatoon and through extensive distance education opportunities. Programs serve every economic and public service sector. As a polytechnic, the organization provides the depth of learning appropriate to employer and student need, including certificate, diploma and degree programs, and apprenticeship training. Saskatchewan Polytechnic engages in applied research, drawing on faculty expertise to support innovation by employers, and providing students the opportunity to develop critical thinking skills.



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.

Indigenous role model photos and stories are shared in our annual calendar, on our website and on social media. Saskatchewan Polytechnic currently has 72 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.



Curricula Indigenization

Saskatchewan Polytechnic has undertaken efforts to Indigenize program instruction and curricula, consistent with the institution's Academic Model, as approved in 2016, which committed to including Indigenous content in all programs offered at the institution. Saskatchewan Polytechnic is progressing to integrate Indigenous content into every program by 2023, as stated in 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).

As new programs are developed, and as existing programs undergo regular review and revision, the proposals are reviewed through a quality assurance process that includes endorsement or approval by Saskatchewan Polytechnic's Academic Council. The proposals are compared against standards for Indigenous content as set out in the institutional curriculum framework, approved in 2019. Depending on the credential level, and the occupational standards related to the program, inclusion of Indigenous content and ways of knowing are embedded in the courses of the program. To date, approximately half of Saskatchewan Polytechnic's programs have moved to include Indigenous content. The remainder of programs will go through this process to include Indigenous content in the next three years, and as programs move through the regular review and revision cycles, further content will be included in a continuous improvement manner.

kiskēyīhtamowin asiwacikan

To support the integration of Indigenous content into programs, as well as support faculty in teaching the materials, an Indigenous knowledge container, **kiskēyīhtamowin asiwacikan**, was created. This knowledge container was developed with guidance from Elders. It provides curricular resources, background information such as land acknowledgement wording and examples from faculty.

In addition, a faculty team has been created with membership drawn from all school areas to support further inclusion of Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing into all programs.



Human resources projects

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

- **Indigenous Awareness Sessions** for faculty and staff across all four campuses. The one-day training dispels myths and misconceptions, creates awareness of the history of Indigenous peoples, and improves race relations and understanding of differing cultures by providing information from an Indigenous perspective. These sessions provide a safe atmosphere for any participant to ask questions in an open and non-judgmental environment.
- Saskatchewan Polytechnic has adapted training to include the **Blanket Exercise**, an interactive learning experience developed by Kairos Canada that teaches Indigenous rights history. These sessions are designed to be fun, educational and thought provoking. Each session is a full day and can accommodate up to 30 people. Participants receive a training manual as an informational resource once the session is complete.
- The **Indigenous Gathering** brings Indigenous staff together from all areas of the organization to experience, support and encourage cultural connections. This two-day event promotes professional and personal development sessions in a variety of Indigenous cultural practices. The Indigenous Gathering has proven successful for faculty and staff to meet, be encouraged and support one another. It is a retention initiative proven successful in influencing positive change in the workplace and ultimately benefits our students and Saskatchewan's future workforce.
- At Saskatchewan Polytechnic, the practice of Indigenous traditions and ceremonies, including smudging and pipe ceremonies, will be protected, promoted and accommodated while ensuring acceptable air quality for occupants of adjacent spaces and places. In March 2019, Saskatchewan Polytechnic launched a revised policy and procedure for **Smudging, Pipe Ceremonies** and other **Indigenous Ceremonial Use of Smoke**. Smudging spaces honour Indigenous culture, and promotes cultural safety and a welcoming, nurturing and empowering environment for Indigenous colleagues and students.

Teaching Reconciliation with 4 Seasons of Reconciliation

All Saskatchewan Polytechnic faculty and staff are able to access an online certificate program in 4 Seasons of Reconciliation, a multi-media 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.

Events and celebrations

Orange Shirt Day, September 30, 2020

Saskatchewan Polytechnic recognized Orange Shirt Day by coming together in the spirit of Reconciliation to remember and honour the First Nations, Métis and Inuit children who survived the residential school system, and those who were lost. Indigenous students' centre coordinators provided information and a full day of activities online.

Saskatchewan Polytechnic created an Orange Shirt Day Facebook profile frame in recognition of this important day. Zoom virtual backgrounds with an Orange Shirt Day image were made available to employees.

Louis Riel Day, November 16, 2020

A Facebook Live event was held in recognition of Louis Riel Memorial Day. This day celebrates the life of Louis Riel, a Canadian politician who represented the Métis peoples' interests. Events included raising the Métis flag and singing of the Métis anthem, as well as performances by fiddlers, singers and dancers.

Facebook event stats: 969 video views, 1668 reached, 475 engagements, 44 comments, 21 share, 36 likes.

Rock Your Mocs Week, November 16-20, 2020

From November 16-20 Saskatchewan Polytechnic celebrated Rock Your Mocs week. Participants who submitted a picture of themselves wearing moccasins to the Indigenous Students Centre Facebook page under the Rock Your Mocs post were entered into a draw for a \$300 gift card for the Wanuskewin Gift Shop.

Indigenous students holiday celebrations, December 2020

Indigenous students' centre coordinators organized a Facebook Live event. The event included holiday greetings from Dr. Larry Rosia, president and CEO; Dr. Has Malik, provost and vice-president, Academic; and title sponsor Farm Credit Canada (FCC). Entertainment included Dolores Greyeyes Sand, Christmas Carols in Cree, and comedian Dakota Ray-Williamson.

In December the Indigenous Strategy team handed out nearly 120 holiday hampers to Indigenous students across the province. The 2020 Indigenous student holiday hamper campaign was presented by FCC.

In addition to the holiday hamper program, Indigenous Strategy organized several virtual holiday events, including the 10 Days of Holiday Giveaways sponsored by AMI Supply. Students were invited to daily, virtual events taking place in early December over the noon hour including Indigenous 101, Kitchen Party, Cree for Beginners and Tipi Time. Indigenous students in attendance had the opportunity to win a gift card.

Thank you to all of the 2020 Indigenous Student holiday sponsors: AMI Supply, Farm Credit Canada, FHQ Developments, Great Plains Contracting and K+S Potash Canada!



Indigenous Students Honour Ceremony, March 24, 2021

Saskatchewan Polytechnic has been hosting honour ceremonies to celebrate the hard work, dedication and achievements of its Indigenous students for more than 30 years, but this year's celebration had special significance. The event's theme for 2021 was Honouring Resilience—a fitting tribute to recognize a year that has stretched students' abilities to adapt and succeed even more than usual.

The virtual event hosted on Facebook Live welcomed all Indigenous students, their families and friends as well as Elders and other members from the student's home communities.

Presented by SaskTel, the online event included greetings from Elder Rick Daniels; His Honour the Honourable Russ Mirasty, Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan; Chief Bobby Cameron, Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations; Glen McCallum, Metis Nation Saskatchewan president; Dr. Larry Rosia, Saskatchewan Polytechnic president and CEO; Dr. Has Malik, Saskatchewan Polytechnic provost and vice-president, Academic; and Deanna Speidel, Saskatchewan Polytechnic Indigenous Strategy director (interim). The celebration included an honour song, jingle dress performance by Buffalo Boy Productions and entertainment by Jordan Daniels Fiddle Music. Thank you to all of the Indigenous Honour Ceremony sponsors: AMI Supply, Nutana Machine and SaskTel!

National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit People (MMIWG2S), May 5, 2021

On May 5, Saskatchewan Polytechnic honoured Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit people (MMIWG2S).

There were several ways employees and students could recognize MMIWG2S.

Saskatchewan Polytechnic created an MMIWG2S Facebook profile frame in recognition of this important day. Zoom virtual backgrounds with a MMIWG2S image were made available to employees.

The Saskatchewan Polytechnic community was encouraged to wear red on May 5 and share photos on social media.

Indigenous Strategy held a noon-time Facebook Live event with Percy Lezard (they/them/theirs) on the National Action Plan, which was created to address the Calls for Justice in the National Inquiry's Final Report for MMIWG2S.



Display recognizing National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit People (MMIWG2S)

A permanent display to honour and bring awareness to Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) remains at the Moose Jaw campus and serves as a reminder of Saskatchewan Polytechnic's commitment to reconciliation. This display is renewed on an annual basis.



Indigenous Day of Learning, May 28, 2021

In cooperation with ILDC, Indigenous Strategy was pleased to host the Indigenous Day of Learning. On this day, all faculty and staff were invited to travel their learning journeys together. The day began with a welcome and prayer from Elder Rick Daniels along with greetings from Mike Gillespie, associate vice-president, Learning and Teaching. Indigenous Strategy faculty facilitated sessions focused on Indigenous ways of knowing and doing, weaving these ways into Saskatchewan Polytechnic teaching and learning, and the learning needs and strengths of Indigenous students.

National Indigenous Peoples Day, June 21, 2021

On June 21, Saskatchewan Polytechnic 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. Indigenous teachings, storytelling music and language were featured by First Nation, Metis, and Inuit peoples. Events included greetings and presentations from Dr. Larry Rosia, Sask Polytech president and CEO; Deanna Speidel, Sask Polytech Indigenous Strategy director; Elder Rose Bird, Sask Polytech Prince Albert campus resident Elder; Jordan Daniels, Métis fiddle musician; Dakota Ray Hebert, Indigenous actor, playwright, comedian, writer and producer; Elder Rick Daniels and Naulaq LeDrew, Inuit elder guest and presenter.

In collaboration with National Indigenous Peoples Day activities Saskatchewan Polytechnic launched a new Indigenous student video which is housed on numerous Saskatchewan Polytechnic Facebook pages, YouTube and saskpolytech.ca.



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 2020-2021 are summarized below.

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 went towards the publication of the 2021 Indigenous Student Role Model Calendar and the new 2020-21 Indigenous Activity Book.

Muskeg Lake Cree Nation and Saskatchewan Polytechnic partnership

Saskatchewan Polytechnic signed a memorandum of understanding with Muskeg Lake Cree Nation. This new collaborative partnership will explore opportunities to promote meaningful skills training and educational opportunities for the youth of Muskeg Lake Cree Nation and ways to amplify community economic development and growth for the First Nation community.

The City of Saskatoon, Gabriel Dumont Institute, Radius Community Centre, Saskatchewan Polytechnic and Saskatoon Tribal Council

These partners are coordinating the kanātan nipiy (the water is clean/clean water) program. The training is an opportunity for Indigenous people to gain essential skills and access employment opportunities in water treatment and distribution facilities — such as with the City of Saskatoon's Water and Waste Operations.

Saskatchewan Polytechnic and the Office of the Treaty Commissioner

Saskatchewan Polytechnic signed a strategic alliance with the Office of the Treaty Commissioner, marking a new partnership to foster Indigenous inclusive learning environments. The organizations have come together to work on providing Treaty Education and Indigenous Awareness on all Saskatchewan Polytechnic campuses across the province.



Indigenous student enrolment

Indigenous enrolment has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Here are the Indigenous enrolment numbers for the 2020-2021 academic year.

- In 2020-21, Indigenous enrolment was 2,523, a decrease of 680 from 2019-20, which is 21 per cent (down by 33 per cent in basic education, 20 per cent in cert-dip-degree programs and seven per cent in apprenticeship programs).
- Among cert-dip-degree programs, Indigenous enrolment was significantly lower in Hospitality & Tourism (down by 54 per cent), Human Services & Community Safety (down by 33 per cent) and Natural Resources and Built Environment (down by 18 per cent).
 - In Hospitality and Tourism, there was significant decrease in Food Service Cook, which went from 58 students down to seven (decrease of 88 per cent).
 - In Human Services & Community Safety, there was significant decrease in Early Childhood Education Certificate, which went from 133 students down to 18 (decrease of 86 per cent).
- In cert-dip-degree programs, Indigenous enrolment was **UP** in the School of Transportation (by three per cent).
- In cert-dip-degree programs, Indigenous enrolment in year one of study was down 27 per cent, while non-Indigenous enrolment was only down two per cent.
- Attrition rate for Indigenous students in cert-dip-degree programs was lower than last year (14 per cent vs 15 per cent). However, it was higher than the overall attrition rate for Sask Polytech (by seven per cent).

Expenditures

SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES RELATED TO CORE FUNCTIONS	
Salaries and benefits	\$ 1,239,336
Materials and supplies	\$ 24,065
Services	\$ 83,878
Travel and PD	\$ 582
Total	\$ 1,347,861

Scholarships and bursaries

In 2020-21, 338 awards totaling \$414,767.90 was disbursed to Indigenous students. In 2020-21, Saskatchewan Polytechnic allocated \$30,000 for Indigenous Student Emergency Bursaries; the total dispersed was \$19,500. 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. \$3,000 was 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 2020-2021 Indigenous report card will be provided to the Ministry of Advanced Education in October 2021.

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 2020-21 data will be produced for the Ministry of Advanced Education in October 2021 to meet this reporting requirement.



saskpolytech.ca/indigenous