



S

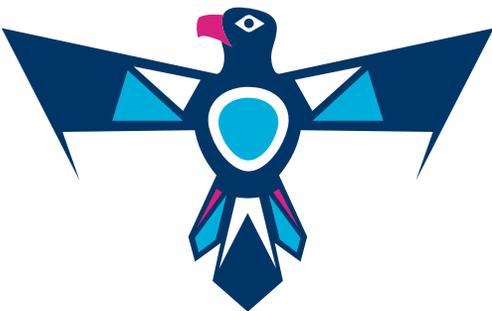
Indigenous Engagement and Education Plan

2024–2026



Sheridan

Sheridan recognizes that Indigenous Peoples are the traditional stewards of the lands on which we live, work and study. We respect the unique priorities and differences of each Indigenous community. And while these communities may share common themes, we appreciate that their local histories, social customs, traditions, governance and social circumstances may differ. Sheridan also acknowledges that as a postsecondary institution, we have a responsibility to advance truth and reconciliation, as well as to uphold our commitments as a signatory of the Indigenous Education Protocol established by Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICan) in 2014.



Accountability statement and vision

Sheridan acknowledges that we are an institution steeped in settler-colonial history and structures, and that we have a responsibility to advance truth and reconciliation in authentic and meaningful ways. This responsibility entails centring Indigenous needs, voices, practices and protocols in an intentional manner, while seeking to understand the history, intent and spirit of the relationship between Indigenous and settler communities, as envisioned in the Two Row Wampum treaty as a basis for modern-day relationships.

Sheridan will align practices and structures toward greater inclusion and belonging of Indigenous Peoples and communities, beginning with acknowledging the responsibility Sheridan has to Indigenous education. We must identify the unique position we hold as a leading postsecondary anchor institution and the relational opportunities that exist within our region and beyond to advance truth and reconciliation discourse and practice.

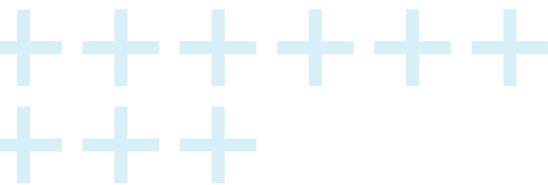
To achieve our relational strategic and operational goals with integrity, Sheridan has established a new first principle in our 2027 strategic plan that provides a clear path forward for development of an Indigenous engagement and education plan.



Mino miikana: We respect and value the history, wisdom and expertise of Indigenous Peoples and see it as a core individual and collective responsibility to clear a good path (*mino miikana*) through leadership and action that will ensure meaningful access to Indigenous education, truth and relationships.

The Indigenous Engagement and Education Plan outlined in this document presents an interconnected set of goals, structures, outcomes and actions based on this principle. Through leadership, individual and collective action, Sheridan will demonstrate its commitment to this principle by building strong, meaningful and mutually beneficial relations and partnerships, while centring the needs and voices of Indigenous learners, faculty and staff.

Sheridan envisions creating positive change through innovative ideas and actions that will meaningfully benefit Indigenous Peoples and communities, while ensuring settler and international populations continue to learn about the history, culture and contributions of Indigenous Nations.



Background

In partnership with Mohawk College, Sheridan established its first Aboriginal initiatives office in 2014 — one year before the federal Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) released its Calls to Action, which include education as a key theme with two major strands. The first focuses on improving access to education for Indigenous learners and increasing educational attainment levels and success rates. The second, equally important, calls for the education of faculty on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods for education of non-Indigenous students to build their capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy and respect. The focus of this engagement and education plan is on both strands, understanding that both Indigenous learners and institutional actions are a priority and that a coordinated but dedicated approach should be implemented.

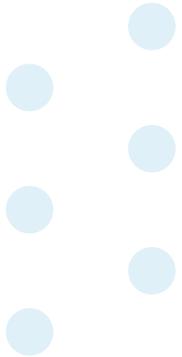
In 2016, the Aboriginal Initiatives Office was renamed the Centre for Indigenous Learning and Support (CILS). In 2017, the Centre began to report directly to the Provost and Vice President, Academic — this shift recognized the centrality of truth and reconciliation to Sheridan’s academic mission. In 2018, Sheridan was a signatory to CIGan’s Indigenous Education Protocol, committing to uphold seven principles essential to meeting Indigenous Peoples’ learning needs and to support self-determination and socio-economic development of Indigenous communities. In 2019, the Centre shifted reporting to the Office of Inclusive Communities to engage in supporting a more inclusive Sheridan. During that time, an Indigenous learning and support plan was created and lasted until its expiration in 2022. The plan focused on six main areas and placed CILS as being accountable for all Indigenous awareness activities, decolonial efforts and Indigenous student services. Metrics were included in the plan but lacked outcome reporting mechanisms.



In late 2022, Sheridan hired an external Indigenous consultant to conduct a review of our Indigenous engagement and education initiatives to date. The outcome was a report released in early 2023 that outlined a path forward focused on leadership, land, reciprocity and relationships. The overall purpose of the external review was to evaluate opportunities and provide recommendations for the development and implementation of a sustainable Indigenous engagement roadmap to guide Sheridan toward our renewed Indigenous Engagement and Education Plan. It's important to note that the review did not focus on Indigenous learners. It would be wrong to exclude Indigenous learners and how Sheridan can improve the supports and services we provide. Drawing from CILS' Support Plan (2018–2022), consultation conducted with Indigenous learners in 2021 for Sheridan's Babamadziiwin project and a review of leading reports focusing on Indigenous learners in the postsecondary education sector, Sheridan identified a focus on Indigenous student recruitment, retention and success as a key pillar.

Since the completion of the review, several developments have taken place: Sheridan appointed a Special Advisor to the President and Vice Chancellor on Indigenous Engagement for a period of one year, we undertook new research projects in partnership with Indigenous communities, we opened Indigenous student centres at each campus location, and Generator at Sheridan launched an Indigenous resource guide to help researchers contemplating Indigenous research.

Externally there has been movement as we are coming up on the ninth anniversary of the TRC's Final Report and 10 years since CILS' Indigenous Education Protocol was launched. Across the province, postsecondary institutions continue to find innovative ways to build and expand partnerships with First Nation and community-based educational institutes. Indigenous self-identification policies and practices have been contemplated and implemented, and discussions continue to take place around how to ethically incorporate Indigenous knowledges into curriculum. Another development that will impact Sheridan is the new requirement under the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB) that requires Indigenous knowledges in degree programs as non-core electives. This approach is expected to expand to other programs in the future.



Accountability statement and vision

This document includes key elements of Sheridan's new three-year Indigenous Engagement and Education Plan based on *mino miikana* as aligned with Sheridan's 2027 strategic plan, as well as in coordination with the newly revised Indigenous Education Council mandate and governance structure.

As outlined below, a recommended action in 2024–25 is to establish an organizational structure that includes two Indigenous-focused units that report to separate administrative areas based on their respective functional areas of responsibility: one being Indigenous learner-driven and the other being focused on engagement

and education. These units will work collaboratively and coordinate operational plans, as they are both integral to the overall success of Sheridan's Indigenous Engagement and Education Plan.

Four main priorities have been identified as the pillars that will guide Sheridan's Indigenous engagement and education activities. The Plan has been designed to achieve the following outcomes, which support the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, CIGan's Indigenous Education Protocol and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Priority	Outcomes
1. Indigenous leadership	<p>A clear governance structure that drives decision-making and sustainable change based on the needs of Indigenous educational priorities.</p> <p>A mechanism to ensure Indigenous voices and viewpoints are always considered and where possible represented throughout Sheridan, especially at decision-making tables.</p> <p>Reporting mechanisms to track progress, promote transparency and accountability.</p>
2. Relationships and reciprocity	<p>A coordinated community engagement framework resulting in robust and collaborative community-based partnerships rooted in mutual respect and reciprocity at both the local and national levels.</p>
3. Indigenous access and retention	<p>Indigenous learner access and retention strategies to increase rates across the diverse Faculties at Sheridan, with tailored supports to ensure well-being and access to cultural resources.</p> <p>Strategies to improve representation of Indigenous employees and faculty across Sheridan with the goal of reaching 2% over five years.</p>
4. Indigenous education	<p>By 2027, every member of the Sheridan community will have completed at least one Indigenous-focused module to increase their knowledge about Indigenous histories, cultures and current realities.</p> <p>Multiple permanent ways that Indigenous history, resilience and culture are more visible, felt and celebrated across Sheridan's campuses.</p> <p>In partnership with Indigenous communities, organizations and knowledge holders, Sheridan will develop a critical path with milestones to become a hub that educates the local settler and international communities about Indigenous histories, cultures and current realities, and their responsibilities toward advancing truth and reconciliation.</p>

Each priority area has a key goal with associated actions that will drive the outcomes identified above. It's important to note that several of these initiatives will require funding as well as increased capacity of current staff and faculty. Strategic supports and external funding will be crucial to the success of the Plan.

Priority 1: Indigenous leadership

Goal:

Enhance capacity within Sheridan by creating a governance structure, reporting and decision-making mechanism that will lead/support system-wide change to advance truth, reconciliation and Indigenous education, create a safe environment for Indigenous students and staff, and build collaborative and community-engaged partnerships.

Responds to CICan's Indigenous Education Protocol principles:

- Ensure governance structures recognize and respect Indigenous Peoples.
- Commit to making Indigenous education a priority.

Leading:

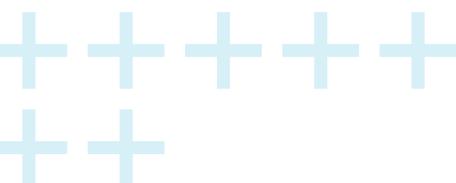
VP, Inclusive Communities

Supporting:

AVP, Human Resources

Actions:

- Approve a refreshed Indigenous Education Council mandate and governance body that includes internal reporting structures to assist Sheridan in meeting our goals by providing recommendations and strategic guidance in the areas of relationship building, Indigenous education, admission, recruitment and curriculum development.
- Create a position for and hire an Associate Vice President, Indigenous Engagement and Education to collaborate, lead and advise on Sheridan's Indigenous engagement and education efforts and work closely with the Indigenous Education Council and internal reporting structures.
- Establish an Indigenous Engagement Office that focuses on institutional and academic priorities, separate but in collaboration with Indigenous student services, reporting to the Vice President, Inclusive Communities, with a focus and mandate on:
 - + Providing strategic and policy leadership on Indigenous initiatives at the college.
 - + Maintaining a system to collect, track and measure Sheridan's progress in implementing the Indigenous Engagement and Education Plan.
 - + Enhancing relationships with Indigenous communities, organizations and peoples through outreach, partnership development and community-based initiatives.
 - + Supporting Sheridan's efforts in decolonizing and creating Indigenous-focused learning outcomes within our teaching, learning and curriculum delivery.
 - + Supporting Indigenous-led research, education and training initiatives at Sheridan.
- Create a position for and hire an Indigenous Coordinator to support the mandate of the Indigenous Engagement Office.
- Identify and establish a mechanism to ensure Indigenous voices and viewpoints are always considered and where possible represented throughout Sheridan.
- Create a reporting mechanism to track progress, promote transparency and accountability.



Priority 2: Relationships and reciprocity



Goal:

Strengthened relationships and partnerships with Indigenous communities that advance respect, reciprocity and reconciliation.

Responds to CICan's Indigenous Education Protocol principles:

Build relationships and be accountable to Indigenous communities in support of self-determination through education, training and applied research.

Leading:

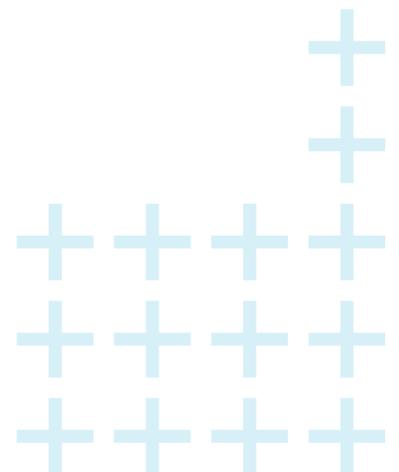
- AVP, Indigenous Engagement and Education
- VP, Research

Supporting:

VP, Academic

Actions:

- Implement an Indigenous partnership framework and protocol that outlines Sheridan's approach to relationship building, including a protocol on identifying, building and maintaining relationships.
- Create a strategy for Indigenous community relationship building and partnership development through research, innovation and entrepreneurship activities through Generator at Sheridan, based on Indigenous self-determination.
- Build on our current multi-year research partnership on Anishinaabemowin language revitalization to develop an academic division strategy and actions aligned with the TRC Calls to Action for postsecondary institutions to support strengthening of Indigenous languages based on Indigenous leadership.
- Ongoing membership with the Indigenous Peoples Education Circle to ensure Sheridan is continually collaborating with Indigenous leadership and voices within the provincial and national postsecondary systems.



Priority 3: Indigenous access and retention

Goal:

Increase the recruitment, access and retention rates of Indigenous learners, staff and faculty by implementing strategies that proactively respond to and support their distinct and diverse needs.

Responds to CICan's Indigenous Education Protocol principles:

- Commit to increasing the number of Indigenous employees with ongoing appointments throughout the institution, including Indigenous senior administrators.
- Establish Indigenous-centred holistic services and learning environments for learner success.

Leading:

- AVP, Indigenous Engagement and Education
- AVP, Human Resources

Supporting:

- AVP, Student Experience
- AVP, Advancement

Actions:

- Collaborate with Human Resources to create a recruitment and retention strategy to increase Indigenous administrative and faculty positions to equitable levels: 2% over five years.
- Collaborate with the Office of the Registrar to create an Indigenous learner access and retention plan with targets and a dedicated Indigenous Student Recruitment and Community Engagement Coordinator to increase the number of Indigenous learners within Sheridan.
- Create a Manager of Indigenous Student Success role to plan, collaborate and implement an Indigenous-focused/cultural support plan, with an emphasis on success and wellness, reporting directly to the Associate Vice President, Student Experience.
- Work with Advancement to create a fundraising strategy to identify funding sources to create new initiatives and programs that will support the Indigenous community at Sheridan.



Priority 4: Indigenous education



Goal:

Indigenous knowledges, ways of being, doing and storytelling are responsibly and respectfully shared, prioritized and taught across Sheridan through place-making and curriculum development.

Responds to CICan's Indigenous Education Protocol principles:

- Implement intellectual and cultural traditions of Indigenous Peoples through curriculum and learning approaches relevant to learners and communities.
- Support students and employees to increase understanding and reciprocity among Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

Leading:

- AVP, Indigenous Engagement and Education
- AVP, Facilities and Sustainability

Supporting:

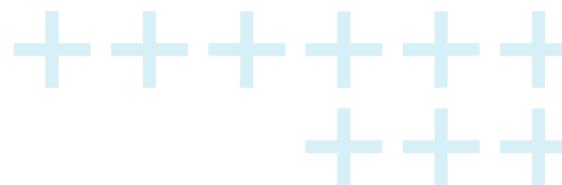
VP, Academic

Actions:

- Create a customized Indigenous cultural awareness training program in partnership with 4 Seasons of Reconciliation to build a foundational baseline of knowledge across the Sheridan community.
- Create a plan to include intellectual and cultural traditions of Indigenous Peoples in curriculum and learning approaches relevant to learners and communities through the creation of Signature Learning Experiences, and curriculum and program development as required by the new PEQAB requirement to include Indigenous knowledges in non-core electives for degree programs.
- Create a long-term plan with tools, resources and transformative learning opportunities focused on Indigenous awareness and knowledge of the history of colonialism and roles of non-Indigenous peoples in decolonization and reconciliation.
- Create a plan for a permanent installation/storytelling area at each campus that recognizes Indigenous Peoples, cultures and practices to demonstrate a respectful and interconnected community.



Next steps: approach to planning



It's crucial that ongoing Indigenous engagement and consultation is integrated into Sheridan's strategic, operational, academic planning and implementation lifecycles. However, one very important distinction to make is that through this plan, Sheridan must reset our current approach of bundling all things Indigenous via the current Centre for Indigenous Learning and Support model. This means moving away from centralizing the responsibilities of Indigenous engagement, education and learner supports to incorporating clear communication practices and accountabilities throughout Sheridan, while respecting the acute need for collaboration and self-determination of Indigenous staff.

This distinction is set out below:

Indigenous engagement and education core mandate

- Indigenous engagement and relationship building.
- Create Indigenous programs, awareness and learning opportunities.
- Support Indigenous staff and faculty recruitment and retention strategy development.
- Indigenous-focused research, innovation and entrepreneurship partnerships and programs.
- Indigenous approaches to knowledge and best practices.
- Special projects to support Indigenous communities, organizations and peoples.

Indigenous student supports and success mandate

- Direct Indigenous student support through the lifecycle of learners at critical transition points with a focus on wellness and culture.
- Support Indigenous students' goals, improve service coordination processes, collaborate with the campus community and advise how to increase student experience and enrolment management capabilities.
- Provide meaningful access to Indigenous cultural activities and safe spaces of belonging for Indigenous learners.
- Special programs that support Indigenous learners and relationship building.

A solid governance structure is crucial to the success of Indigenous engagement. In addition to a newly formed Indigenous Engagement Office, Sheridan will need to establish two internal working groups to guide the implementation of the Plan and ensure that key deliverables are on track: one that focuses on Indigenous engagement and outreach, and the other that focuses on Indigenous education.

Suggested mechanisms for ensuring accountability:

- Incorporating Indigenous initiatives/actions in the PFDR process
- Strategic metrics in EDI Dashboard
- Working groups
- Program review
- Reporting processes

The Indigenous Engagement and Education Plan outlined will be further developed based on continuous feedback and consultation.

As stated by Justice Murray Sinclair, the Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission: "Reconciliation is not an Aboriginal problem — it involves all of us." It will take the entire Sheridan community to work together to achieve our collective goals.

Land acknowledgment

We acknowledge the land for sustaining us and for providing us with the necessities of life.

This territory is covered by the Dish with One Spoon treaty and the Two Row Wampum treaty, which emphasize the importance of joint stewardship, peace and respectful relationships. As we reflect on land acknowledgments, let us remember that we are all stewards of the land and of each other.

We recognize the land on which we gather has been and still is the traditional territory of several Indigenous nations, including the Anishinaabe, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, the Wendat, the Métis and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. Since time immemorial, numerous Indigenous nations and Indigenous Peoples have lived on and passed through this territory.

Sheridan affirms it is our collective responsibility to honour the land, as we honour and respect those who have gone before us, those who are here and those who have yet to come. We are grateful for the opportunity to be learning, working and thriving on this land.



Sheridan