

# Saskatchewan Indigenous Post-Secondary Education Forum Summary Report

February 29, 2024 | Saskatoon | Saskatchewan



# Saskatchewan Indigenous Post-Secondary Education Forum Summary Report

## Executive Summary

First Nations University of Canada (FNUiv), Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI), and Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies (SIIT), in partnership with the Ministry of Advanced Education, were honoured to plan and host the Saskatchewan Indigenous Post-Secondary Education (IPSE) Forum at Wanuskewin Heritage Park in Saskatoon, on February 29, 2024. All 18 post-secondary institutions in Saskatchewan were in attendance.

The forum's theme, *Holistic Wrap-Around Supports for Indigenous Students*, aimed to bring together post-secondary institutions and Indigenous students, Knowledge Keepers and Grandmothers, and government officials from the K-12 and post-secondary sectors in meaningful discussions to improve Indigenous post-secondary education outcomes.

First Nations and Métis students played a central role in the forum, joining their institution's delegation and providing valuable perspectives. Their contributions, especially during the table discussions, offered deep insights into the unique challenges and needs of Indigenous students in post-secondary education.

The forum included:

- an evening reception;
- opening prayer and reflections;
- welcoming addresses by Indigenous and government leadership;
- table discussions on Indigenous student and institution priorities and actionable recommendations;
- an inspiring keynote address on the role of post-secondary institutions in shaping Indigenous education outcomes;
- learning sessions on *Culture, Language and Land-Based Education and Partnerships*;
- a panel discussion with Indigenous students on *Holistic Indigenous Student Supports and Well-being* moderated by an Indigenous education expert; and
- a cultural celebration and closing prayer.

The session on the *Identification of Priorities and Table Discussions* provided opportunities for Knowledge Keepers, Grandmothers, and Indigenous students to validate priorities and share their perspectives. Each table provided actionable recommendations to improve Indigenous student transitions into post-secondary, retention, and well-being while attending post-secondary, and transitions into the labour market (see table below for highlighted themes). These actionable recommendations aim to improve Indigenous student outcomes through meaningful sector collaboration.



Priorities	Themes
<b>Improving First Nations and Métis student transitions into post-secondary</b>	Holistic and culturally responsive wrap-around supports
	First Nations and Métis academic support and preparedness
	Relationships, engagement and representation of First Nations and Métis
	Access to financial supports
<b>Improving First Nations and Métis student retention and well-being while attending post-secondary education</b>	Holistic and culturally responsive wrap-around supports
	First Nations and Métis academic support
	Relationships, engagement and representation of First Nations and Métis
	First Nations and Métis student financial aid and support
	Addressing systemic barriers
<b>Improving First Nations and Métis student transitions from post-secondary into labour market attachment</b>	Holistic and culturally responsive wrap-around career supports
	Career development and employment support
	Partnerships between post-secondary institutions, First Nations and Métis communities and industry
	Addressing systemic barriers

\* See Appendix 2 for a detailed summary of actionable recommendations.

## Context

On October 1, 2019, the Ministry of Advanced Education hosted a sector-wide IPSE Symposium at FNUniv, bringing together post-secondary institutions to present and discuss leading practices and to network. The agenda focused on holistic approaches to education; transition to post-secondary education and student success; Indigenous engagement; reconciliation; and transition to the labour market. A survey following the IPSE Symposium showed overwhelming support for continued sector collaboration. This work was paused due to the pandemic and other unforeseen circumstances.

In early 2023, the Ministry of Advanced Education’s Senior Indigenous Advisor reconvened with post-secondary institutions to gather feedback on facilitating IPSE Forums. Every institution expressed interest in participating, recognizing the value of sector-wide collaboration to improve Indigenous post-secondary education outcomes.

With that in mind, and in partnership with the Indigenous post-secondary institutions, the 2024 IPSE Forum aimed to bring the sector together again in person, emphasizing the need for guidance and leadership from Knowledge Keepers, Grandmothers, and Indigenous students. Maria Campbell, Knowledge Keeper, provided cultural leadership and direction to the forum planning group.

## Forum Theme and Objectives

The theme of this in-person gathering was *Holistic Wrap-Around Supports for Indigenous Students*. The forum aimed to provide post-secondary institutions and Indigenous students, Knowledge Keepers, and Grandmothers, and government officials from the K-12 and post-secondary sectors the opportunity to share wise practices, network, identify priorities, and foster collaboration to improve Indigenous post-secondary education outcomes in a culturally enriching and affirming space. The forum was intentionally held at Wanuskewin Heritage Park, a site of cultural significance, to create a meaningful setting for these important discussions.

The anticipated outcomes of the forum included fostering relationship building, creating valuable learning opportunities, and initiating potential collaborations on new projects aimed at improving Indigenous post-secondary education outcomes.

## **Guidance and Leadership**

The forum was guided by two lead Knowledge Keepers, Maria Campbell and Roland Duquette, along with Grandmothers Nora Cummings, Delores Kenny, Harriet Oaks St. Pierre, Judy Pelly, and Rose Roberts. We were honoured to have Elders-in-Residence Lorna Standingready from Luther College at the University of Regina and Ron Ratte from Northlands College in attendance as part of their institution's delegation. Knowledge Keepers Joseph Naytowhow and Kimble Worme led the cultural celebration and round dance. The prayers, wisdom, and insights of the Knowledge Keepers and Grandmothers were integral to the gathering, providing guidance and sharing knowledge with participants throughout the day.

## **Forum Agenda**

### ***Evening Reception***

GDI's Métis Culture and Heritage Museum hosted an optional come-and-go evening reception, offering a beautiful setting to celebrate Métis culture and connect with one another before the forum. The reception's live fiddle music and appetizers created a vibrant atmosphere to network and build relationships. The Museum also provided a rich educational experience as it showcases culturally significant artifacts and artwork by Métis people.

### ***Opening Prayer, Reflections and Welcoming Address***

To begin the forum's proceedings in a meaningful way, the lead Knowledge Keepers, Maria Campbell and Roland Duquette, offered an opening prayer and reflections.

The Emcees for the day's activities were Chantal Stenger, Academic Initiatives Coordinator, SIIT, and Rebecca Morris-Hurl, Government Relations Officer, FNUniv.

Welcoming addresses from institution and government leaders included: Riel Bellegarde, President, SIIT; Brett Vandale, Acting Executive Director, GDI; Dr. Jacqueline Ottmann, President, FNUniv; and the Honourable Gordon Wyant, K.C., Minister of Advanced Education. Their welcoming remarks reaffirmed the importance of coming together in the spirit of collaboration. They acknowledged Indigenous post-secondary institutions as both provincial and national leaders in supporting First Nations and Métis student success. They emphasized the significance of Indigenous perspectives and pedagogy, honouring Treaties and building a strong future together for the next seven generations. Executives also underscored the need for continued collaboration and leadership across the sector to effectively serve Indigenous students.

### ***Identification of Priorities and Table Discussions***

In advance of the forum, post-secondary institutions and Indigenous students completed an anonymous poll to identify priorities for improving Indigenous student education outcomes and fostering sector collaboration. The poll focused on three priority areas and asked:

1. What does your institution/what do you as a student think are the top two priorities that are needed for improving Indigenous student transitions into post-secondary?
2. What does your institution/what do you as a student think are the top two priorities that are needed for improving Indigenous student retention and well-being while attending post-secondary?
3. What does your institution/what do you as a student think are the top two priorities that are needed for improving Indigenous student transitions from post-secondary into labour market attachment?

Findings were presented at the forum and provided valuable insights into the priorities of Indigenous students and institutions (Appendix 1).

The *Identification of Priorities and Table Discussions* presentation and session was facilitated by the Ministry of Advanced Education's Senior Indigenous Advisor, Jennifer Brass. Each table focused on one of the three priority themes. During the table discussions, Knowledge Keepers, Grandmothers, and Indigenous students validated the findings and shared their perspectives. Each table then reflected on their assigned theme and generated actionable recommendations to improve Indigenous student transitions into post-secondary, retention and well-being while attending post-secondary, and transitions into the labour market. These actionable recommendations aim to improve Indigenous student outcomes through meaningful sector collaboration (Appendix 2).

### ***Keynote Address***

Tavia Laliberte, former Vice President, Academics, SIIT, delivered an inspiring keynote address, emphasizing the vital role of post-secondary institutions in shaping Indigenous education outcomes. She shared wise practices for supporting Indigenous student success, stressing the importance of addressing the basic needs of the immediate families and cultural identity. She also encouraged collaboration among post-secondary institutions, highlighting the need for a holistic approach that honours Indigenous worldviews, cultures, and strengths.

### ***Learning Sessions***

The first learning session topic focused on *Indigenous Culture, Language and Land-Based Education*. Presentations included:

- *Land-Based Learning Camp* by Reanna Daniels, Lecturer of Indigenous Education, FNUniv;
- *Michif Language, Learning and Epistemology Camp* by Russell Fayant, Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP) Faculty, GDI; and

- *Indigenous Early Childhood Education Land-based Education Camps* by Adrienne Durocher, Director of Early Childhood Education and Juli Binning, Program Coordinator for Early Childhood Education, SIIT.

The presentations highlighted the importance of land-based learning and integrating Indigenous ways of knowing, being, doing, learning, and relating, while honouring spiritual, ancestral, and physical aspects of the land as a teacher. They also focused on connecting students to nature and strengthening their relationship with the land. Best practices for language revitalization involved reconstructing languages, mobilizing fluent older speakers, restoring intergenerational transmission through meaningful interactions and teaching Indigenous languages in school.

In the second learning session, the topic focused on *Partnerships*. Presentations included:

- *Community-based Partnerships and Programming* by Trina Joseph, Community Based Program Coordinator, FNUniv;
- *Oyateki Partnership between SIIT, GDI and USask* by Allison (Ally) Rinas, Associate Director of Oyateki, SIIT; and,
- *Kahkisiw: Holistic Student Supports* by Ranabelle Stroh, Director for Student Wellness Supports and Danae Sayers, Business Student, SIIT.

Participants learned about innovative community-based partnerships and programming initiatives that provide wrap-around support for the entire student life cycle – from entry into post-secondary into employment. This includes holistic supports and Indigenous-based wellness services that address the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual needs of the student. The presentations also emphasized the importance of cultivating meaningful relationships and collaboration between institutions and Indigenous communities.

### ***Student Panel Discussion***

The student panel discussion provided an opportunity to hear from First Nations and Métis students who shared their perspectives on the theme of *Holistic Student Supports and Well-Being*. Panelists included Isaac Hedstrom, SUNTEP, GDI; Autumn Thomas, Indigenous Practical Nursing, SIIT; Breanna Tremblay, Indigenous Social Work, FNUniv; and was moderated by Lori Campbell, Associate Vice-President, Indigenous Engagement, University of Regina.

The students discussed the challenges transitioning to post-secondary education, including:

- mental health;
- lack of cultural and Indigenous support systems, such as the absence of First Nations and Métis counsellors and information about available First Nations and Métis resources;
- difficulty in determining a field of study;
- inadequate high school counseling; and
- obstacles accessing funding.

They spoke about their experiences with culture shock and isolation after leaving their home community for urban centres. They also stressed the importance of addressing financial barriers, such as moving and living expenses, improving financial literacy, and knowing where and how to seek financial assistance.

When reflecting on supports to enhance their academic and career journeys, the students highlighted:

- the importance of having access to Knowledge Keepers and cultural supports;
- inclusive policies aligned with First Nations and Métis cultures and values (e.g., accommodating bereavement periods);
- providing support in exploring and embracing their cultural and gender identity, and a safe space for LGBTQ2S+ peoples;
- improving communication channels for students seeking help;
- fostering a sense of community and cultural connection on campus;
- tailoring technology workshops for mature students;
- offering workshops on essential skills like resume writing, interviews, and networking; and
- the need for advisors and support staff to be available at convenient times for students.

The students emphasized the vital role of Indigenous cultural and community resources in supporting their lifelong educational journeys. These resources include:

- facilitating peer connections;
- promoting volunteering and participation in cultural events to build a sense of belonging;
- cultivating Indigenous communities on campus;
- revitalizing Indigenous languages;
- increasing awareness of language and land-based programming;
- supporting Indigenous student associations; and
- offering personalized support to address individual needs.

Looking ahead, the students shared their vision on the future of Indigenous post-secondary education, highlighting the importance of:

- increasing Indigenous representation in leadership roles;
- working together with respect for one another;
- ensuring curriculum is rooted in Indigenous knowledge;
- embracing “two-eyed seeing” teaching in education by embracing Indigenous and western worldviews;
- supporting the holistic needs of Indigenous students with services like housing, childcare, and transportation;
- reconciliation and decolonization initiatives;
- enhancing campus support systems and collaboration between student services and students;
- implementing mentorship programs to connect senior students with first-year students; and
- improving knowledge sharing through mandatory, in-person sessions.

These discussions highlighted the importance of an inclusive and culturally affirming environment where Indigenous students feel valued, inspired, and supported to thrive in their personal, academic, and career journeys. By prioritizing initiatives such as access to culturally informed support services, celebrating, and fostering cultural identity and connection, and committing to reconciliation and decolonization efforts, post-secondary institutions can holistically support Indigenous student success and well-being.

### ***Cultural Celebration***

The forum concluded with a cultural celebration where Knowledge Keepers Joseph Naytowhow and Kimble Worme led a blessing and round dance. The round dance provided a meaningful way to unite and bring everyone together and reinforce a shared commitment to advancing Indigenous student education outcomes.

### **Evaluation Results**

The evaluation survey for the IPSE Forum was conducted, in March 2024. A total of thirty individuals completed the survey (25%), providing feedback and insights on their IPSE Forum experience.

### ***Key Findings***

- 97% of respondents reported being satisfied or extremely satisfied with their overall experience at the forum.
- The pre-forum networking opportunity at the Gabriel Dumont Institute's Métis Culture and Heritage Museum was well received, with respondents appreciating the culturally significant exhibits, artwork, and beautiful space. Respondents also enjoyed the catering, live music, and networking opportunities it provided.
- Respondents identified the contributions of the table discussions, student panel, learning session presentations, and networking opportunities as the forum's most valuable components. They also emphasized the important role of the Grandmothers, Knowledge Keepers, and inclusion of culture throughout the forum. One respondent highlighted the significance of having a Grandmother and an Indigenous student at each table.
- The majority of respondents felt the IPSE Forum had appropriate representation from the post-secondary sector and noted the importance of including Indigenous students as integral members of institution delegations.
- Respondents provided suggestions for future events, including increased representation of Indigenous students and Knowledge Keepers, extending the forum's duration and table discussion time, fostering collaboration with the K-12 sector, and including high school students, and providing more platforms for Indigenous student voices to be heard.

The findings illustrate the valuable learning experiences and relationship building opportunities gained at the IPSE Forum and will serve as a guide to help enhance the quality and impact of future events.



## APPENDIX 1: Pre-Forum Poll of Indigenous Students' and Post-Secondary Institutions' Priorities

### 1. Indigenous Student Transitions into Post-Secondary

#### Indigenous Students Responses

75%

- Strengthening Indigenous community partnerships and support
- Creating respectful learning environments that incorporate Indigenous cultures and promote identity and belonging

50%

- Culturally relevant support services
- Incorporation of Indigenous knowledge into curriculum
- Hiring Indigenous educators and staff

25%

- Access to Indigenous cultural activities
- Including Indigenous communities in decision making processes
- Having supportive instructors
- Incorporating Indigenous languages
- Access to Mentorship programs

### 1. Indigenous Student Transitions into Post-Secondary

#### Post-Secondary Institutions Responses

35%

- Access to financial supports for students/reducing barriers

30%

- Relationships with Indigenous communities
- Wrap around Indigenous cultural supports, student orientation

24%

- Academic support, preparedness and tutoring
- Housing and safe residences

18%

- Indigenous and cultural content
- Student wellbeing and connection to peers
- Pathway programs

12%

- Access to Elder/programming
- Indigenous cultural events
- Childcare
- Financial support for institutions

## 2. Indigenous Student Retention and Well -Being While Attending Post-Secondary

### Indigenous Students Responses

50%

- Culturally affirming, inclusive, safe and respectful environments and spaces
- Holistic and culturally responsive support services
- Academic supports, tutoring and advising
- Access to Mental Health and wellness resources and supports

25%

- Supportive instructors to assist Indigenous students'success
- Involve Indigenous communities in the design and delivery of services (self-determination)
- Opportunities for Indigenous students to connect with their community and cultural practices
- Address systemic barriers such as discrimination and racism
- Hiring of Indigenous staff

## 2. Indigenous Student Retention and Well -Being While Attending Post-Secondary

### Post-Secondary Institutions Responses

41%

- Welcoming environment/sense of community
- Wrap around Indigenous cultural student supports

35%

- Academic supports for Indigenous students
- Reducing financial barriers

18%

- Access to resources and events to support and prioritize mental health and wellbeing of Indigenous students
- Building connections of Indigenous students and peers

12%

- Having staff that understand systemic issues, needs and resources to assist students
- Dismantle barriers– transportation, childcare, housing
- Role models, mentorships
- Financial for PSIs to increase supports and services

### 3. Indigenous Student Transitions from Post-Secondary into Labour Market Attachment

#### Indigenous Students Responses

75%

- Provide Indigenous students with access to workintegrated learning opportunities
- Career development and employment support; career guidance on interests and not just monetary

50%

- Addressing systemic barriers including discrimination, racism, bias, stereotypes

25%

- Indigenous specific employment programs and partnerships
- Job readiness and jobcoaching
- Involve Indigenous communities, employers and organizations in the development and implementation of job strategies
- Career counselling
- Increase land-based education

### 3. Indigenous Student Transitions from Post-Secondary into Labour Market Attachment

#### Post-Secondary Institutions Responses

53%

- Employee/student mentorship, role models and internship opportunities and programs and to expand networks

30%

- Increase partnerships between PSIs, businesses and industry to reduce student barriers at work site

24%

- Industry readiness– cultural, historical, TRC understanding, anti racism training
- PSIs holistic and culturally relevant Indigenous postgraduate and career supports for jobs and transition into labour market

18%

- Job readiness workshops
- Providing access to Elders, cultural and spiritual connections, mental health supports

12%

- Reconciliation, promote crosscultural awareness and dialogue

## APPENDIX 2: Identification of Priorities, Table Discussions and Actionable Recommendations

### Guiding Principles

A distinction-based approach should be applied to the priorities and actionable recommendations by respectfully acknowledging First Nations and the Métis Nation in Saskatchewan. This includes the diversity within nations, such as the Plains Cree/nêhiyawak, Swampy Cree, Woodland Cree, Sauteaux/Anihšīnāpēk, Dakota, Lakota, Nakota, Dene, and Michif/Métis Nation when developing and implementing actions.

Please note that the actionable recommendations are a summary of what was heard at the Saskatchewan IPSE Forum, held in February 2024, and they are not intended to be a comprehensive list. There are other opportunities, innovative ideas, solutions and partnerships that can and should be explored by the sector.

When considering actionable recommendations, it is recommended to appropriately and respectfully engage with Knowledge Keepers, First Nations and Métis students and local First Nations and Métis communities and organizations situated within the applicable post-secondary institution's region prior to implementing any recommendations.

Improving First Nations and Métis student transitions into post-secondary		
Themes	Priorities	Actionable Recommendations
<b>Holistic and culturally responsive wrap-around supports</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide culturally strong support services that address First Nations and Métis students' unique needs.</li> <li>• Increase access to childcare.</li> <li>• Provide housing options tailored to First Nations and Métis students' needs, ensuring safe and supportive living environments.</li> <li>• Model programs that support First Nations and Métis student success.</li> <li>• Increase access to Elders and Knowledge Keepers, culture camps and ceremonies.</li> <li>• Ensure First Nations and Métis student wellbeing and connection to peers.</li> <li>• Enhance accessibility to mental health supports.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide culturally strong support services for First Nations and Métis students before they start their program by providing student orientations, and access to safe housing, childcare, transportation, food security, etc.</li> <li>• Foster collaboration between post-secondary institutions for First Nations and Métis student transfers and wrap-around supports.</li> <li>• Create learning environments that respect and incorporate First Nations and Métis cultures, languages, traditions, and ceremonies, promoting a strong sense of identity, community and belonging.</li> <li>• Connect First Nations and Métis students with mentors and peers who can assist with transition to post-secondary, and guide them to community and support networks.</li> <li>• Increase the number of trained mental health support staff that utilize Indigenous methodologies, and ensure access to proper diagnosis of mental health.</li> </ul>

<p><b>First Nations and Métis academic support and preparedness</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve access to academic support and have instructors and staff who can identify First Nations and Métis students’ specific needs, and connect them with the appropriate resources.</li> <li>• Provide First Nations and Métis students with tutoring, academic advising, and pathway programs.</li> <li>• Ensure academic advisors/instructors are understanding, patient, and believe in First Nations and Métis students and want the best for them.</li> <li>• Address infrastructure disparities to improve internet connectivity to ensure equitable access to online learning for First Nations and Métis students.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support First Nations and Métis student success through summer camps and student orientations.</li> <li>• Provide additional academic advising tailored for First Nations and Métis high school students and mature students to help bridge the transition to post-secondary education.</li> <li>• Incorporate First Nations and Métis languages and increase access to free language resources.</li> <li>• Incorporate First Nations and Métis perspectives, histories, and ways of knowing into curriculum including training on pedagogical approaches for teachers/instructors.</li> <li>• Increase virtual learning opportunities and improve and increase access to reliable internet in rural areas and offer technical support.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Relationships, engagement and representation of First Nations and Métis</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include First Nations and Métis community representation on the Board of Governors and advocate for increased First Nations and Métis representation on governing bodies.</li> <li>• Strengthen First Nations and Métis community partnerships and supports by collaborating with community leaders, post-secondary coordinators, and Knowledge Keepers in decision making processes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase First Nations and Métis representatives at various levels of institutions and governance structures such as Boards (ministry needs to delegate), sub-committees, wrap-around recruitment, and support services, counsellors, academic advisors, faculty and staff.</li> <li>• Increase First Nations and Métis advocates in high schools to mentor and help students transition into post-secondary, especially in rural/First Nations communities.</li> <li>• Increase staffing related to First Nations/Métis courses and programs to ensure adequate support and resources are available for First Nations and Métis students.</li> <li>• Make Indigenous Studies 100 mandatory to ensure all students gain knowledge about First Nations and Métis perspectives, histories, and ways of knowing.</li> <li>• Institutions need to work with First Nations and Métis communities to assist with transportation, including parking and bus passes.</li> </ul>



<b>Access to financial supports</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure First Nations and Métis students have the knowledge and support to access scholarships, bursaries, band funding, and financial supports.</li> <li>• Allocate larger sums of funds to institutions to build budgets in their First Nations and Métis departments and support services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce barriers such as application fees, transcript fees, and deposits for First Nations and Métis students.</li> <li>• Increase financial literacy, including personal financial management, among students.</li> <li>• Increase funding for Saskatchewan Apprenticeship Training Allowance (ATA), Education and Training Incentive (ETI), and restore Provincial Training Allowance (PTA).</li> <li>• Senior Management and leadership continue advocating for financial support for First Nations and Métis students.</li> </ul>
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<b>Improving First Nations and Métis student retention and well-being while attending post-secondary education</b>		
<b>Themes</b>	<b>Priorities</b>	<b>Actionable Recommendations</b>
<b>Holistic and culturally responsive wrap-around supports</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dismantle barriers for First Nations and Métis students, such as transportation, childcare, and housing to facilitate access to education, provide holistic and culturally responsive support services that address specific needs of First Nations and Métis students.</li> <li>• Promote and increase access to resources, events, First Nations and Métis counsellors, Elders-in-Residence, and cultural activities, to support and prioritize mental health and wellness, spiritual and wellbeing of First Nations and Métis students.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culturally responsive support services should include mentorship, connection to essential resources such as food security, housing, transportation, and extending support with off-campus resources.</li> <li>• Address childcare needs by establishing First Nations and Métis-led childcare services attached to institutions. Consideration of drop-in centres for evening and weekend options.</li> <li>• Connect with Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) for culturally responsive mental health services.</li> <li>• Establish support systems for First Nation and Métis students relocating to urban centres, designate personnel to assist these students, and provide targeted orientation to promote connections.</li> <li>• Increase wrap-around supports with tools like vision boards, promotion and awareness of wellness aids, along with daily drop-in services.</li> <li>• Create culturally appropriate spaces to access cultural activities and ceremonies (e.g., Have places to smudge and practice culture and spirituality).</li> <li>• Government direction to all post-secondary institutions to provide</li> </ul>

		First Nations and Métis student success initiatives with dedicated funding and the means to implement relationship building.
<b>First Nations and Métis academic support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foster welcoming, culturally affirming, inclusive, safe and respectful environments where First Nations and Métis students feel a sense of belonging.</li> <li>• Recognize the diversity within First Nations and Métis cultures and that “a cookie cutter approach” cannot effectively support students.</li> <li>• Increase student peer support, including Student Associations which focus on culture.</li> <li>• Support First Nations and Métis student empowerment and pathways to leadership.</li> <li>• Provide support for gendered trades and others.</li> <li>• Accommodate diverse learning styles, such as needs versus program timeline.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate First Nations and Métis languages, content and provide training on pedagogical approaches for teachers and instructors.</li> <li>• Re-think program delivery to allow First Nations and Métis students to adapt by starting within a more land-based and experiential approach.</li> <li>• Conduct workshops on Excel, Word, and PowerPoint, as well as accessing library resources.</li> <li>• Implement live-in mentorship programs with First Nations and Métis staff in residence.</li> <li>• Increase academic supports, including culturally relevant academic advising for First Nations and Métis students and access to tutors for various subjects.</li> <li>• Increase role models, mentors and peer support opportunities for First Nations and Métis students.</li> </ul>
<b>Relationships, engagement and representation of First Nations and Métis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance First Nations and Métis student supports and representation in diverse areas in post-secondary.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase First Nations and Métis cohorts.</li> <li>• Establish First Nations and Métis Student Councils/Associations that represent their interests and provides a platform for their voices and leadership.</li> <li>• Increase First Nations and Métis representation among board members, staff, instructors, and counselors.</li> <li>• Inspire First Nations and Métis students by involving them in decision-making processes and mentorship opportunities.</li> <li>• Foster connections among Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for First Nations and Métis students to connect with their community and cultural practices while attending post-secondary education.</li> </ul>
<b>First Nations and Métis student financial aid and support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce financial barriers for First Nations and Métis students.</li> <li>• Enhance financial aid for institutions to increase supports.</li> <li>• Support First Nations and Métis students in trades, especially women,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have emergency supports available for First Nations and Métis students as well as education, scholarships, and training funding available in user-friendly, seamless ways.</li> </ul>

	and provide aid with professional/trade expenses (tools, safety gear).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide funding and scholarships without GPA requirements, especially for mature First Nations and Métis students with dependents.</li> <li>• Provide funding or eliminate fees for First Nations and Métis students to access mental health resources and increase access to diagnosis of mental health concerns.</li> <li>• Support from leadership to advocate on behalf of First Nations and Métis students to the federal government to increase funding allowances to reflect the cost of living.</li> <li>• Partner with foodbanks and grocery stores to reduce stigma, and enhance access to basic resources for First Nations and Métis students.</li> </ul>
<b>Addressing systemic barriers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure staff understand systemic issues and the specific needs of First Nations and Métis students, along with access to contacts and resources to assist students.</li> <li>• Address systemic and institutional barriers such as discrimination and racism.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address misconceptions about First Nations and Métis student funding (E.g. Not all First Nations and Métis students receive funding).</li> <li>• Provide training and support for instructors to effectively assist First Nations and Métis students to succeed.</li> <li>• Promote diversity and inclusion, anti-racism, anti-oppression, and cultural awareness training for faculty, staff and students. Examples include:</li> <li>• <a href="https://iceclearning.fnuniv.ca/courses/4-seasons-of-reconciliation">https://iceclearning.fnuniv.ca/courses/4-seasons-of-reconciliation</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://iceclearning.fnuniv.ca/courses/advancing-re-al-conciliation">https://iceclearning.fnuniv.ca/courses/advancing-re-al-conciliation</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://iceclearning.fnuniv.ca/courses/building-research-relationships-with-First-Nations-and-Métis-communities-brric">https://iceclearning.fnuniv.ca/courses/building-research-relationships-with-First Nations and Métis-communities-brric</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://learn.gdins.org/product?catalog=Micro001">https://learn.gdins.org/product?catalog=Micro001</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://siit.ca/wellness-community-development/">https://siit.ca/wellness-community-development/</a></li> </ul>

<b>Improving First Nations and Métis student transitions from post-secondary into labour market attachment</b>		
<b>Themes</b>	<b>Priorities</b>	<b>Actionable Recommendations</b>
<b>Holistic and culturally responsive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultivate an open and welcoming environment throughout the career journey.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide holistic and culturally relevant post-graduate and career supports for First Nations and Métis students, including mental health services, access</li> </ul>

<p><b>wrap-around career supports</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a nurturing program that offers courses and embeds First Nations and Métis languages and culture.</li> <li>• Invest in First Nations and Métis Knowledge Keepers.</li> </ul>	<p>to Knowledge Keepers, and opportunities for cultural and spiritual connections as they search for jobs and transition into the labour market.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish cultural centres and smudge rooms to practice culture and ceremony. Allow post-graduates and alumni to access cultural spaces.</li> <li>• Allow funding that doesn't take away from First Nations and Métis students supports.</li> <li>• Provide training close to home with access to daycare on evenings and weekends.</li> <li>• Invest in First Nations and Métis recruiters.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Career development and employment support</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide comprehensive career development and employment support for First Nations and Métis students.</li> <li>• Inspire First Nations and Métis students to work toward their academic and life goals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide workshops on job readiness, life skills, and job finding strategies; and increase access to job coaches, employment centers and tailored guidance to help First Nations and Métis students understand their options, employer expectations, and how to use their education to move through their career.</li> <li>• Offer micro-credential programs as a ladder to additional programming and training.</li> <li>• Provide First Nations and Métis students with access to various work-integrated learning opportunities, such as work experience, co-op programs, field hours, internships, apprenticeships, and practicums, including hands-on trades, and community-service learning for class assignments.</li> <li>• Provide career guidance for First Nations and Métis students in K-12.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Partnerships between post-secondary institutions, First Nations and Métis communities and industry</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involve First Nations and Métis communities, employers and organizations in the development and implementation of job strategies to improve First Nations and Métis student transitions into the labour market.</li> <li>• Bring First Nations and Métis mentors and employers into institutions to engage with students.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foster relationships and increase partnerships between post-secondary institutions, First Nations and Métis communities, and industry to assist with access, communication of opportunities, programming, practicums, training and apprenticeships, and support services to reduce student barriers in the workforce.</li> <li>• Establish First Nations and Métis Alumni Associations.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shape training and programs in collaboration with industry needs.</li> <li>• Develop relationships with First Nations and Métis community partners to enhance labour market attachment.</li> <li>• Encourage, promote, and incentivize employers to engage in hiring and supporting First Nations and Métis students and graduates.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish First Nations and Métis mentorship opportunities, networking events and programs to pair students with alumni, industry professionals, and role models in the workforce to facilitate employment, career exploration, and networking.</li> <li>• Develop First Nations and Métis specific employment programs and partnerships with First Nations and Métis organizations and businesses to create pathways and job opportunities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Addressing systemic barriers</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritize reconciliation initiatives, promote values and cross-cultural awareness and dialogue.</li> <li>• Recognize that Indigenization requires more than just professional development and allocate resources accordingly.</li> <li>• Address systemic barriers including discrimination, racism, bias, and stereotypes in the workplace.</li> <li>• Address employment barriers, particularly for First Nations and Métis women in trades.</li> <li>• Acknowledge First Nations and Métis students' challenges.</li> <li>• Address language barriers for First Nations and Métis students.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement and deliver cultural awareness training, reconciliation education and anti-racism/oppression courses to employers, and consider it as a micro-credential. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="https://iceclearning.fnuniv.ca/courses/4-seasons-of-reconciliation">https://iceclearning.fnuniv.ca/courses/4-seasons-of-reconciliation</a></li> <li>○ <a href="https://iceclearning.fnuniv.ca/courses/advancing-re-al-conciliation">https://iceclearning.fnuniv.ca/courses/advancing-re-al-conciliation</a></li> <li>○ <a href="https://iceclearning.fnuniv.ca/courses/building-research-relationships-with-First-Nations-and-Métis-communities-brric">https://iceclearning.fnuniv.ca/courses/building-research-relationships-with-First Nations and Métis-communities-brric</a></li> <li>○ <a href="https://learn.gdins.org/product?catalog=Micro001">https://learn.gdins.org/product?catalog=Micro001</a></li> <li>○ <a href="https://siit.ca/wellness-community-development/">https://siit.ca/wellness-community-development/</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Promote equity and inclusive hiring practices by working to improve First Nations and Métis representation. This includes job postings with diversity preferences included and fostering culturally safe and supportive work environments.</li> </ul>





Photo Credit: Wanuskewin Heritage Park

