

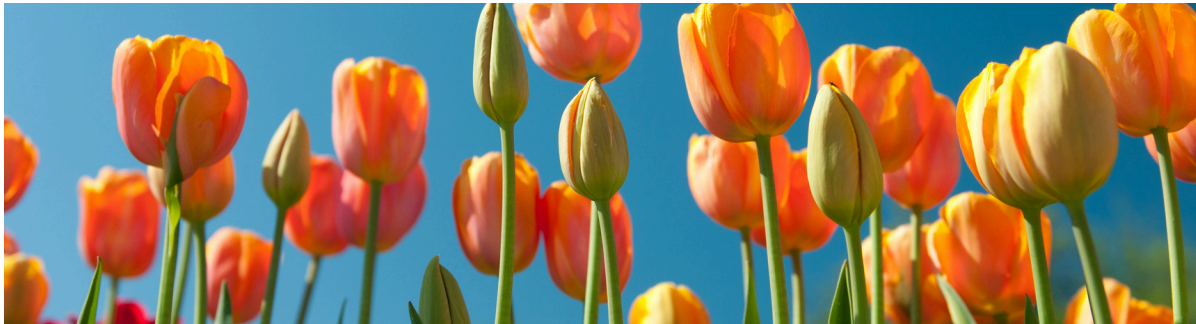
SPRING 2026



# KINUK

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 2 | Issue 1



## **National Indigenous Peoples Day: Honouring the Strength of Indigenous Peoples, Cultures, and Communities**

*"This special day - **June 21st**, is a celebration of the living cultures, languages, knowledge, and relationships that continue to shape our communities today and for generations to come."*



## Why June 21?

Each year on June 21, communities across Turtle Island gather to celebrate National Indigenous Peoples Day, recognizing the rich histories, cultures, languages, and contributions of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples.

Coinciding with the summer solstice—the longest day of the year—this day carries special significance for many Indigenous Nations. It is a time of gathering, sharing, and celebration; a time to honour ancestors, knowledge holders, youth, artists, language speakers, and community members who continue to carry forward Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

In Mi'kma'ki, National Indigenous Peoples Day is also an opportunity to reflect on the enduring strength of the Mi'kmaq and Indigenous

Peoples across the Wabanaki region. Despite generations of colonial policies designed to disrupt Indigenous languages, cultures, and relationships to land, Indigenous communities continue to thrive, innovate, teach, and lead. Their contributions enrich our universities, workplaces, governments, and communities every day.

At Dalhousie, we recognize that celebrating Indigenous Peoples is not limited to a single day. It is reflected in the relationships we build, the knowledge we honour, and the commitments we make to advancing reconciliation and Indigenous self-determination throughout the year.

As we mark National Indigenous Peoples Day, we encourage our community to participate in local celebrations, learn from Indigenous voices, support Indigenous artists and businesses, and take time to reflect on the responsibilities we all share as Treaty People.

JUNE 26, 2026

## Looking Forward Together: **A New Digital Home for Indigenous Relations**

The Office of the Vice-Provost, Indigenous Relations is pleased to share the launch of the newly redesigned Indigenous Relations website, creating a more welcoming, accessible, and community-focused digital home for Indigenous students, staff, faculty, and partners.

The updated website reflects the growth of Indigenous initiatives and relationships across Dalhousie, highlighting community engagement, student supports, research, education, leadership, and the many ways Indigenous knowledge and perspectives continue to shape our university. As part of the launch, we invite you to watch our new welcome video featuring **John R. Sylliboy, Vice-Provost, Indigenous Relations**.

***“Mekitetimek Dalhousie – We Are Proud of Dalhousie”***



Looking ahead, OVPIR has also begun work on the next **Indigenous Strategy (2026–2036)**, building upon the important foundations established by the 2018 strategy. Through engagement and collaboration with Indigenous communities, students, faculty, staff, and partners, this renewed strategy will help guide Dalhousie’s continued commitments to reconciliation, relationship-building, and Indigenous excellence over the coming decade. We invite you to explore the new website, watch the welcome message, and follow along as we continue this work together.

**Visit the new Indigenous Relations website: Click [Here](#)**

JUNE 26, 2026

# Honouring Catherine Martin's Legacy



As we celebrate the many contributions of Indigenous leaders within our communities, we are pleased to share the recent creation of a Wikipedia page recognizing **Catherine Anne Martin**, whose leadership and dedication have had a lasting impact at Dalhousie and beyond.

Developed through a collaboration between the Office of the Vice-Provost, Indigenous Relations and Dalhousie Libraries, the page highlights Cathy's decades of work as a Mi'kmaw educator, advocate, author, and leader. Throughout her time at Dalhousie, Cathy played a pivotal role in advancing Indigenous community engagement, strengthening relationships with Mi'kmaw communities, and helping lay the foundation for what is now the Office of the Vice-Provost, Indigenous Relations.

As Cathy enters retirement, we invite our community to learn more about her remarkable contributions and the legacy she leaves at Dalhousie and across Mi'kma'ki.

Read more:

Wikipedia: Catherine Anne Martin [click Here](#)

A dedicated feature celebrating Cathy's contributions and reflections will appear in the **October issue of Kinuk**.

## Inclusive Pathways to Medical Professions – Medical Sciences

The Inclusive Pathways to Medical Professions (IPMP), Indigenous cohort in the Medical Sciences program was started in Fall of 2022. Four years later, the Indigenous cohort has grown to twenty-five students, with eight students joining the cohort this Fall.



Bottom row (L-R) : Riley Beazley, Noah Nochasak, Kaylie Awalt, Brigitte Pothier  
Top row (l-r): Chelsey Arsenault, Sydney Mason-Gehue, Maegwin Halsey, Madison Spencer, Summer Littlechild, Annabella Kendell.

The vision for IPMP is an equitable and inclusive model of healthcare for all, delivered by diverse, highly qualified medical professionals who are representative of the patients they serve. Medical Sciences provides Indigenous undergraduate students with the knowledge they will need to enter and succeed in professional programs, and the cohort model provides holistic support from entrance to graduation.

This year is a momentous year for the Indigenous IPMP Cohort celebrating our first three graduates;

**Madison Spencer** joined the cohort in her third year at Dalhousie after a chance meeting at the Elsipogtog Mawiomi with Kim Lickers, the cohort advisor. “During my first two years of university, it was easy to fall behind because I only had myself to rely on,” she says. Madison participated in many IPMP cohort events and serves as a respected mentor and for other Indigenous students in the cohort. Madison, from Elsipogtog First Nation is hoping to enter medical school through Keknu’tmasiek Ta’n Tel Welo’ltimk (KW) and eventually be a pediatrician in her home community.



Madison at graduation.

JUNE 26, 2026

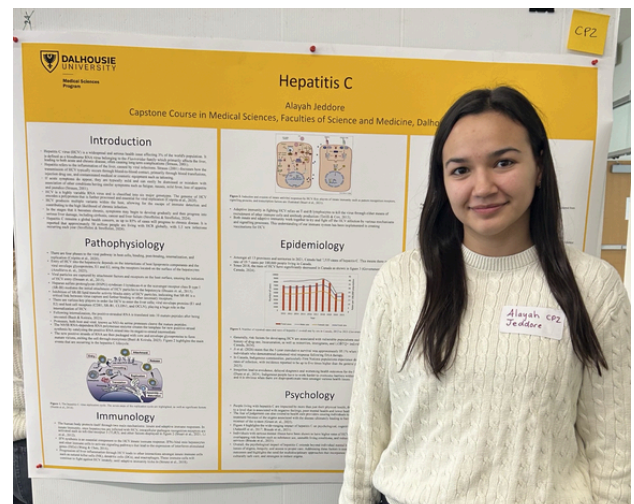
## Inclusive Pathways to Medical Professions – Medical Sciences

**Noah Nochasak** is Inuit from Nunatsiavut, Nain, Labrador. Having completed a certificate as a Construction Engineering Technician and a Bachelor's degree in Adventure Tourism from Thompson River University, Noah came to Dalhousie looking to expand his knowledge of science. Noah graduates from Dalhousie with a degree in Biology, which is an example of the cohort support extending even if the student leaves Medical Sciences. Noah is well known on campus and has made many friends with faculty and staZ. In the cohort, Noah is a mentor who is always willing to share his love of hunting and especially kayaking. At this point, Noah hasn't shared his plans, but any path he takes, he will surely succeed.



Noah wearing his silapák.

**Alayah Jeddore** from Eskasoni First Nation is a student who has shown perseverance and resilience throughout her studies at Dalhousie. Her determination and persistence are examples to other Indigenous medical sciences students. Alayah has a strong rooted connection to her community and culture. Alayah is hoping to enter the Keknu'tmasiek Ta'n Tel Welo'ltimk (KW) pathways to medical school in the future.



Alayah at the Capstone symposium presenting her poster on Hepatitis.

As the Indigenous cohort advisor for Medical Sciences, I offer my deepest congratulations to Madison, Noah and Alayah and best wishes for their future paths.

**Kim Lickers**

Medical Sciences Indigenous Cohort Advisor  
Faculty of Medicine & Science | Medical Sciences  
Dalhousie University

JUNE 26, 2026

## New Leadership for the Transition Year Program

In May 2026, **Rachelle McKay** began a five-year appointment as Director of **Dalhousie's Transition Year Program (TYP)**, a historic access program designed to support African Nova Scotian, Mi'kmaw, and other Indigenous learners transition into university life.



Rachelle is an Anishinaabe woman from Little Saskatchewan First Nation in Manitoba who has deep ties to Mi'kmaw peoples and communities, and holds a Master of Arts degree in Indigenous Governance. Since returning to Dal in 2022, Rachelle served as an Instructor of Indigenous Studies (Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences) and Educational Developer, Indigenous Knowledges and Ways of Knowing (Learning and Teaching.)

Rachelle is a strong advocate for equity-informed and inclusive education who is especially committed to fostering educational spaces where African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaw students feel seen, supported, and empowered to pursue their individual goals. Growing Indigenous participation in the program is a priority for Rachelle as the incoming Director, and she looks forward to expanding access and strengthening student success within the program.

To learn more about the Transition Year Program [click Here](#)

## Keluk telatiken — Honouring Indigenous GRADUATES



Photos by: Cody Turner



### **Cruise Evander Sylliboy**

Bachelor of Commerce (Co-op) Major in Marketing

“My experience at Dalhousie University helped me grow significantly both professionally and academically, especially in areas of leadership, communication, and critical thinking. Since graduating, I have been studying in the Bachelor of Education program at Cape Breton University. My long-term goal is to become a principal in an on-reserve school, where I can combine the management, leadership, and branding skills I developed during university with culturally responsive education practices. I hope to help create a school environment that is strong in both community identity and student opportunity.”

## Keluk telatiken — Honouring Indigenous GRADUATES



### **Kassidy Augustine**

Bachelor of Arts & Social Sciences

“I just recently graduated from Dalhousie with distinction with a Major in Political Science and a Minor in Law Justice and Society. I am from Sipekne'katik First Nation. Dalhousie has truly changed my life and the way I see the world for the better. It gave me so many friends, taught me so much about myself, the world, and allowed me to meet so many Indigenous peoples around the world. I wouldn't be who I am today without the strong work ethic that Dalhousie has given me. In September I am attending Dalhousie Law School with hopes to become a lawyer.”

### **Griffin Bjerke-Clarke**

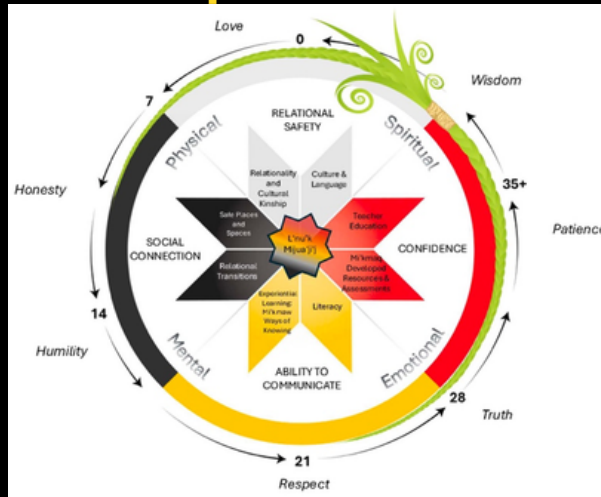
Bachelor of Arts & Social Sciences

Griffin is a Michif (Lizotte, Chouinard, Bell) from Oskana (Regina) Saskatchewan. He is a registered citizen of the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF).

Griffin graduated with a combined honours in Contemporary Studies and English. He is eager to return home as an educator and author.



## L'nu PhD Graduate: Health and Education Research through an Indigenous Methodology and Etuaptmunk Lens



© Katharine Gloade  
Design developed in collaboration with Christy Groves

**Dr. Katharine (Katie) Gloade**, from Millbrook First Nation, convoked on June 3rd after completing the degree requirements for a PhD in Health at Dalhousie University. Katie received funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Canada Graduate Research Scholarship program, the Atlantic Indigenous Mentorship Network Kausattumi Graduate Scholarship Program, a Dalhousie President's Award, and was an Honorary Killam Scholar. She also wants to acknowledge the support she has received from Millbrook First Nation she has had during her education and express deep gratitude to the Storytellers and participants of her doctoral work. Msit No'kmaq.

For the first time in her academic education journey, Katie was able to position Mi'kmaq worldview as the leading voice and the participants in her research as the experts of their, and their children's experiences. Her experience in education and mental health and her lived experience helped to shape the goal and focus of her dissertation work to childhood development and defining school readiness from an L'nu Worldview. This worldview differs in several ways from the Westernized understanding used to shape educational assessments, outcomes, and curriculum.



The findings suggest that L’nu children are continuing to experience chronic pain conditions that may impact growth, development, and learning in the early years. The priorities of school readiness for L’nu involved with the research are rooted in social and kinship connections, the ability to communicate, a sense of confidence and relational safety. She hopes the findings will influence current practice and approaches in education settings for Mi’kmaw children.

The results of her work are summarized in a visual interpretation that merges concepts from the traditional teachings of the Mi’kmaw Seven Sacred Gifts (Elder Murdena Marshall), the Mi’kmaw Life Cycle, the aspects of wholism, health and wellness, the dimensions of L’nuwey School Readiness and the School Readiness Enhancers that influence strengths-based and positive outcomes for Mi’kmaw children and their families.

Aside from her doctoral work, Katie has been working as an Assistant Professor with Dalhousie since 2022 instructing an essential course for first year students in Medicine, Nursing, Dentistry, Dental Hygiene, Pharmacy and Physician’s Assistants students that attends to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s Calls to Action. This cultural safety course, the Introduction to Cultural Safety in Healthcare for Indigenous Peoples, was co-created by the Mi’kmaw community, Mi’kmaw Elders, the Aboriginal Children’s Hurt and Healing Initiative (now the Atlantic Indigenous Children’s Healing Initiative), Indigenous scholars and Dalhousie faculty with the intent of improving healthcare access, health seeking behaviours, and reducing the experience of racism in healthcare for Indigenous people.

Katie is also the Indigenous Scientific Director for a new and exciting research project, Etuaptmu'k W'loti, funded through one of Research Nova Scotia's Focused Research Investments. This project is co-hosted between the Atlantic Indigenous Children's Healing (AICH) Initiative and Tajikeimik (Mi'kmaw Health and Wellness) at IWK Health. This project has four major components, including the expansion of a post-licensure Cultural Safety Course to healthcare sites and clinicians across the province, creating a Cultural Safety Toolkit, utilizing data to identify gaps in care and priority areas for research and intervention, and expanding existing services, like the mobile Ear, Nose and Throat clinic in Eskasoni First Nation to additional First Nations communities throughout the province.



**Recent publications:**

Gloade, K. Francis, J., Sylliboy, J.R., Young, B., MacLeod, E. & Latimer, M. (2026). Promising News from a Cultural Safety Curriculum Pilot Study with Health Clinicians. *Teaching and Learning in Medicine: An International Journal*, Submitted for Review.

Gloade, K. (2026). *Child School Readiness from an L'nu Worldview* [Doctoral dissertation, Dalhousie University]. DalSpace Institutional Repository. Click [Here](#)

JUNE 26, 2026

## In Memory of Elder Patricia “Patsy” Martin

The Office of the Vice-Provost, Indigenous Relations joins community in honouring the life and legacy of Elder Patricia “Patsy” Martin, a respected Mi’kmaw Elder, knowledge keeper, and cultural guide whose wisdom touched countless lives across Mi’kma’ki.



Elder Patsy was a valued partner to Dalhousie University, generously sharing her teachings through ceremonies, cultural guidance, and community engagement. She played an important role in supporting the Dalhousie Agricultural Campus and was present for the opening of Dalhousie’s office in Millbrook First Nation, helping to strengthen relationships between the university and Indigenous communities. We are grateful for the knowledge, kindness, and spirit she shared with our students, faculty, staff, and communities. Her legacy will continue to inspire us.

**To learn more about Elder Patsy’s life and legacy, please visit her obituary: [Click Here](#)**

*Wela’liog, Elder Patsy. You will be deeply missed and fondly remembered.*

JUNE 26, 2026

## Indigenous Student Enrollment 2025/26

In the 2025–2026 academic year, Dalhousie had **745** Indigenous students, including **280** Mi'kmaq students out of total 21,103 students.

*Enrolment data shared here is an unofficial snapshot and may change. Official enrolment reports are released by the university annually in December and should be used as the final source of record.*



Wela'lin

Handwritten signature of John R. Sylliboy

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