

## **Indigenous Strategy 2018 – Recommendations and Progress Update**

### **February 2025**

- 1. Recommendation:** *Invest substantially, with an allocation of at least \$500,000 in the first year, in building institutional human resource capacity, structures, research and library resources to enable the successful implementation of the Indigenous Strategy as a critical institutional priority.*

#### **Summary of Progress:**

- Since 2018, our workforce has included a total of 401 Indigenous individuals. Among them, we've brought on board 320 new Indigenous employees during this period. These include the following roles:
  - Academic Director, Indigenous Health in Faculty of Medicine.
  - Indigenous Health Research Chair in Nursing and Indigenous Health Nursing lead for the Chair.
  - Tier II Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Governance.
  - Tier II Canada Research Chair in Reconciliation, Gender and Identity.
  - Indigenous Student Advisor – Indigenous Student Center (second position to complement existing role).
  - Indigenous Health Program Manager in the Faculty of Medicine.
  - Indigenous Services Librarian.
  - Director, Indigenous Community Engagement.
  - Indigenous Research Facilitator (position currently vacant - search in progress).
  - Director of Schulich Law's Indigenous Blacks and Mi'kmaq (IB&M) Initiative.\*
  - **Manager**, Indigenous Students at the Faculty of Agriculture.\*
  - [Indigenous Advisory Council \(IAC\)](#).\*
  - Tier II Canada Research Chair, Indigenous Peoples Health and Well-Being.\*
- Since 2021, financial support provided to the Indigenous Advisory Council, including for two retreats (2021 and 2022).
- Working towards establishing Indigenous Advisory Council for the Truro Campus.

- 2. Recommendation:** *Develop a new position: Vice-Provost Indigenous Relations (VPIR).*

#### **Summary of Progress:**

- Draft job description developed and shared for initial feedback with Indigenous Advisory Council.
- Search committee will be formed early in 2024 and widespread community consultations around the position will take place early in the new year.
- Hiring anticipated fall 2024.

*\*Established prior to 2018.*

3. **Recommendation:** *Establish an Office of Indigenous Relations, led by the Vice-Provost Indigenous Relations (VPIR).*

**Summary of Progress:**

- The Director of Indigenous Community Engagement, Elder-in-Residence Program, and Millbrook Office and staff currently under the Office of the Vice-Provost Equity and Inclusion will be transferred to the office of the inaugural Vice-Provost Indigenous Relations, who will establish an Office of Indigenous Relations.

4. **Recommendation:** *Through the Office of the Provost, establish mechanisms to ensure appropriate synergies across all of the activities, current and planned, that relate to this Strategy.*

**Summary of Progress:**

- The creation of the Office of the Vice-Provost Indigenous Relations under the Provost will serve as a hub for Dalhousie's activities.

5. **Recommendation:** *Through the Office of the Provost, ensure the development and publication of measurable outcomes and their planned deadlines.*

**Summary of Progress:**

- Ongoing data collection, analyses, and reporting on Indigenous populations on campus by Faculties and further disaggregate to identify the Mi'kmaq populations – see [Community Equity Data Reports](#).
- Two reports are prepared and submitted to the Department of Advanced Education each year through the Office of Equity and Inclusion.
  - As part of Dalhousie's Institutional Outcome Agreement, progress on Participation and Retention of Mi'kmaq and Indigenous Students submitted to the Director, Mi'kmaq and Indigenous Post-Secondary Recruitment and Retention, Department of Advanced Education.
  - Report on the progress and best practices pertaining to Indigenous education and Indigenous student success and well-being.

6. **Recommendation:** *Develop an Indigenous HR plan for both Faculty and Staff in order to increase institutional capacity across all of our campuses.*

**Summary of Progress:**

- Action 2.1 in [Employment Equity Plan](#).

7. **Recommendation:** *Through Senate policies and institutional processes, provide guidance and support for non-Indigenous colleagues regarding further*

*competencies in teaching and research.*

**Summary of Progress:**

- See progress on Recommendation 29.

- 8. Recommendation:** *Review core institutional processes in order that Indigenous perspectives will, over time, be woven throughout constitutional/by-law documents (such as for the Board of Governors, Senate and Faculties), collective agreements, HR handbooks, strategic plans and ongoing reports and accreditation processes.*

**Summary of Progress:**

- See [Pillar 2](#) and [Pillar 4](#) of Dalhousie's Strategic Plan – *Third Century Promise*.

- 9. Recommendation:** *Develop a robust capital plan to enable the eventual construction of a centrally-located building that would honour Dalhousie's location in Mi'kma'ki and provide a space for Elders, for learning by all, for specialized student services, for ceremonies and more.*

**Summary of Progress:**

- The following spaces currently offer this:
  - The Community Engagement sub-office in Millbrook First Nation.
  - The [Indigenous Student Center](#) for advising and the Elder-in Residence Program.\*
  - The CIBC Multicultural Center in the Student Learning Commons on the Agricultural Campus – a hub of the National Truth and Reconciliation Center quiet space for, prayer and meditation.\*
  - [Ko'jua Room](#) – opened in September 2022 as a Mi'kmaw and Indigenous Community gathering space located next to the [Gord Downie and Chanie Wenjack Legacy Space](#).\*

- 10. Recommendation:** *Build ongoing partnerships with relevant Provincial and Federal departments and agencies, including Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada to enable the building of collaborative models, through appropriate funding, across postsecondary institutions that operate within Mi'kma'ki.*

**Summary of Progress:**

- Collaboration on provincial and regional level to discuss shared services among universities in Atlantic Region.
- Faculty of Health engaged with the Province and Mi'kmaq organizations to develop the Indigenous Masters of Social Work Program (overlap with progress on Recommendation 33).
- [Presentations and networking opportunities through CONSUP and Advanced](#)

*\*Established prior to 2018.*

Education.

- 11. Recommendation:** *Build partnerships, through the Director of Indigenous Community Engagement, to provide a range of educational enrichment experiences at the elementary, junior and senior high school levels.*

**Summary of Progress:**

- [Indigenous Health Program](#).
- **Ongoing** discussions with community groups and school education directors and management to build partnerships with elementary and junior high student to offer information on studies and careers.
- [Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn](#) and Atlantic Policy Congress were working with Province and Dalhousie to plan conference to work towards a MOU on research with communities; postponed due to COVID; re-engaging in discussions and seeking funding.
- Ongoing work with Director of Educational Services at Millbrook First Nation.
- Outreach to high school students through the [IB&M Initiative](#).
- Hosted elementary schools from Sipekne'katik First Nation for mock trial at Faculty of Law.

- 12. Recommendation:** *Undertake periodic reviews of the recruitment and admission processes to make sure standard processes do not discourage the participation of Indigenous students.*

**Summary of Progress:**

- Developed [Equity Ethos Statement](#) to identify and eliminate barriers within university policies, regulations, procedures, and practices related to the recruitment, admission, retention, and success of historically and currently equity-denied learners. These learners may reflect one or more of the following identities: Mi'kmaq, Wolastoqiyik, Peskotomuhkati, and other Indigenous peoples.
- Annual Open House for Indigenous high school students (partnership with the Indigenous Student Centre and Recruitment).\*
  - Application fees are waived for participants.
  - See also progress on Recommendation 14.

- 13. Recommendation:** *Enhance and support transition and orientation programming for new and transfer students in all types and levels of program.*

**Summary of Progress:**

- [Dalhousie University Pathways Program – Phase 1](#) (document created).
- [Diversity of Nature – BIPOC-led and BIPOC-focused science outreach](#).

\*Established prior to 2018.

- [Indigenous Pathways in Engineering Program.](#)
- Ongoing transition and orientation support facilitated through [Indigenous Student Centre](#).\*
- [Transition Year Program](#).\*
- [Indigenous Blacks & Mi'kmaq \(IB&M\) Initiative at the Schulich School of Law](#).\*
- [Indigenous Student Access Pathway \(ISAP\)](#).\*
- [Dalhousie Indigenous Students Collective](#).\*

**14. Recommendation:** *Ensure that the Indigenous Student Centre is appropriately resourced by professional staff, student employees and community volunteers to support student retention and degree progression goals.*

**Summary of Progress:**

- Access to Elders for guidance, support, and counsel for all students at the Indigenous Advising Center now expanded to create 10 hours/week for Health Faculties.
- The Indigenous Student Centre now has a second Advisor (overlap with progress on Recommendation 1).
  - The Centre also has access to Student Employment Program funds to hire student employees throughout the academic year.
- Ongoing staff from various Student Affairs and Academic units hold regular hours for students at the Indigenous Student Centre covering areas ranging from health and well-being, study and writing skills, tutoring support and pathways programming.\*

**15. Recommendation:** *Establish an endowed fund to enable provision of multi-year scholarships and bursaries to undergraduate Indigenous students.*

**Summary of Progress:**

- See [Pathways Phase 1 Report – p. 12](#).

**16. Recommendation:** *Establish an endowed fund with the goal to enable 20% or more of our undergraduate Indigenous students to have the opportunity for summer research or other employment.*

**Summary of Progress:**

- Partnership agreement between [CGI](#), Faculty of Computer Science and Millbrook First Nation.
  - 2 co-op positions each term enabled by the funding partner for Millbrook First Nation at no cost to them. Aim to provide opportunities for Indigenous youth to work in their community and for other students to have opportunity to do work with a social responsibility lens.
  - Four students have had Co-op work terms at Millbrook First Nation as

\*Established prior to 2018.

Digital Technology Consultants. Each student is supervised by a Dalhousie faculty member at the Agricultural Campus and a Technical Supervisor provided by CGI.

- 17. Recommendation:** *Establish a designated fund for graduate scholarships for Indigenous students to provide incentive to departments, and individual researchers, to seek out and mentor promising Indigenous undergraduate students into graduate programs.*

**Summary of Progress:**

- [Dalhousie Indigenous Graduate Scholarship.](#)
- [Nova Scotia Black and First Nations Graduate Entrance Scholarships.](#)
- [Promise Scholars Fund – Faculty of Management.](#)
- See [Pathways Phase I - Indigenous](#) and [Pathways Phase II – Indigenous](#) (pending- 2025).

- 18. Recommendation:** *Prioritize selected recommendations within this Strategy in order to foster improvements in the experiences of Dalhousie's current Indigenous students.*

**Summary of Progress:**

- Academic, social and well-being supports available through partners held at the Indigenous Student Centre.\*

- 19. Recommendation:** *Clarify, for internal and external communities, recognition of the uniqueness of Indigenous peoples, their role on this land and the nation-to-nation relationship.*

**Summary of Progress:**

- The Indigenous community and specifically the Mi'kmaw has been identified as a priority in [Dalhousie's 2021-2026 Strategic Plan](#), [Third Century Promise \(Si'st Kasqimtlinaqnipunqekl Teli L' wi'tmasimk\)](#).
- Updated Senate Land Acknowledgement: *The Dalhousie University Senate acknowledges that we are in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People and pays respect to the Indigenous knowledges held by the Mi'kmaq People, and to the wisdom of their Elders past and present. The Mi'kmaq People signed Peace and Friendship Treaties with the Crown, and section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982 recognizes and affirms Aboriginal and Treaty rights. We are all Treaty people.*
- [Dalhousie's Centre for Learning and Teaching](#) offers information about personalizing land acknowledgements and about land acknowledgements in general.
- Partial overlap with progress on Recommendation 22.

\*Established prior to 2018.

**20. Recommendation:** *Develop a campus master plan reflective of our campuses' place in Mi'kma'ki, especially regarding the naming conventions for buildings, streets, and physical features such as gardens.*

**Summary of Progress:**

- [Indigenous Butterfly and Pollinator Garden](#) initiated by Art Gallery (overlap with progress on Recommendation 23).
- The development of an updated campus master plan is necessary and is planned to commence in the coming months.
- The Welcome Circle on Studley Campus includes prominently “Pjila’si”.
- Renaming River Road at the Agricultural Campus to Sipu Awti.
- Sign at the corner of Oxford and Coburg on a main thoroughfare onto campus has been updated to include the Mi’kmaq land acknowledgment.

**21. Recommendation:** *Define territorial acknowledgement statements used across our campuses both in public settings and by individuals.*

**Summary of Progress:**

- See progress for Recommendation 19.

**22. Recommendation:** *Host relevant events on our campuses, both for celebration and to address reconciliation.*

**Summary of Progress:**

- Formal relationship between the Indigenous Student Centre and Dalhousie Multifaith Services, specifically the Pipe Carrier.
- Sacred Fire ceremony held monthly.
- Engaging the Millbrook community for their input into the expansion of the Agricultural Campus.
- Invitation to the launch of an information session on the new BSc offering available at the Agricultural Campus.
- Meeting in Millbrook to share [Understanding Our Roots recommendations](#).
- Athletics honoured residential school survivors before a tournament with visiting athletes.
- Hosted the Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs Secretariat (APC) and the Association of Atlantic Universities (AAU) to celebrate the renewal of their MOU in June 2022.
- North American Indigenous Games (NAIG).
- The Indigenous Student Centre hosts on-going student events focused on academic progress and success; wellness and well-being; sense of belonging. The Centre also serves as host for the annual Mawio'mi. Student events are communicated through social media platforms and a monthly newsletter.\*
- [Mi’kmaw History Month events at Dalhousie](#).\*

\*Established prior to 2018.



**23. Recommendation:** *For art and artifacts on our campuses, Dalhousie's art gallery director will work in consultation with communities.*

**Summary of Progress:**

- Few Indigenous artifacts available in [Dal Art Gallery collections](#), - for borrowing through Loans on Campus program. Gallery to create new online database with searchable fields (2025) to find specific objects, themes and artists.
- Initiated fundraiser to purchase more contemporary artworks by local Black and Indigenous artists in partnership with Dal Advancement.
- [Indigenous Butterfly and Pollinator Garden](#) initiated by Art Gallery – including commissioning project with Millbrook artists to create benches (2024) and will include signage in Mi'kmaq language.
- Partnered with Prismatic Arts Festival to co-present performance by Mi'kmaq artist Sarah Prosper in Gallery.
- Scheduled spring/summer exhibition by senior Mi'kmaq artist Alan Syliboy (May– August 2024) which will include outreach and education initiatives and publication with essay by artist and scholar Michelle Syliboy.
- Alan Syliboy [painting of Dan Paul](#) as a FASS fundraising activity to honour Dal grad and renowned Mi'kmaw historian; the portrait is now hanging in the lobby of the Marion McCain Building (as of Sept 2023).
- The successful nomination of [Jeremy Dutcher](#) for an Aurum Alumni Award.
- [New Dawn Staff of Belonging](#) commissioned and introduced at Convocation ceremonies.

**24. Recommendation:** *Provide opportunities for faculty, staff and students to engage with communities.*

**Summary of Progress:**

- Overlap with progress identified in Recommendation 22.
- The establishment of the sub-office for Community Engagement in Millbrook First Nation.
- Computer Science workshop at the Millbrook summer camp and ongoing internship at Dalhousie's Millbrook Office.
- [Aboriginal and Indigenous Law in Context](#) course has involved trips to Indigenous communities and the Native Friendship Centre.

**25. Recommendation:** *Ensure that Dalhousie's outward facing materials include appropriate representation of Indigenous faculty, staff and students, and our place in Mi'kma'ki.*

**Summary of Progress:**



- Dalhousie's principal external communication tools all include the Mi'kmaq land acknowledgement. (i.e. dal.ca, prospective student viewbooks, and Dalhousie University Prospectus).
- Dalhousie's brand guidelines also reflect the importance of Indigenous representation in both imagery and content.
- The Dalhousie Community Experience Committee (DCEC) has also incorporated an Indigenous lens into its [Engagement Principles](#).
- The Dalhousie University Community Engagement team is also committed to working with other units and faculties to support increased Indigenization on our campuses through various place making and campus vibrancy initiatives (i.e. new Coburg/Oxford sign with Mi'kmaq land acknowledgement, planned Mi'kmaq artwork and sculpture installation outside the Killam Library, community mural project at Larch/Jennings intersection, with mural design by Indigenous artist).
- The Dalhousie Communications, Marketing & Creative Services team also provides support for Mi'kmaq Heritage Month (October), Mawio'mi, National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (September 30) and we are developing (with VPEI office) a fulsome 'days and dates of recognition' calendar to be incorporated with the editorial calendar.
- Media relations/pitching strategy constantly looks for opportunities to have diversity of voices, including Indigenous (Mi'kmaq) representation.

**26. Recommendation:** *Embed in the cyclical reviews of all university policies and procedures consideration of Indigenous ways and impact on Dalhousie faculty, staff and students, including, but not limited to, policies and procedures around accommodation, racism, and bullying.*

**Summary of Progress:**

- HRES personal harassment and discrimination policies\* and pending review to include a racial violence component.
- Senate hosted [EDI Forums](#).
- The Centre for Learning and Teaching [Senior Educational Developer, Anti-Oppressive and Transformative Education](#) works with Faculties to achieve equitable learning environment.

**27. Recommendation:** *Develop campus-wide Indigenous cultural awareness through consultation with and learning from community members in Dalhousie and elsewhere, and educational events for all Dalhousie's academic and other leaders.*

**Summary of Progress:**

- Partial overlap with progress reported for Recommendations 22, 24.
- Action 6.5 in the [Employment Equity Plan](#) is to "develop and facilitate other educational resources and programs related to Indigenous/Mi'kmaw history and the current experiences of community members as well as African Nova Scotian history and current experiences of community members."
- Office for Equity and Inclusion's "Speak Truth to Power" Forums included members of the Indigenous communities and three special panels: Fishing

\*Established prior to 2018.

Rights, Residential Schools and Women Chiefs.

- Office for Equity and Inclusion hosting of the Viola Desmond Lecture featured Michele Audette 2021.

**28. Recommendation:** *Ensure that all Dalhousie degree programs (at the undergraduate and graduate levels) be required to implement Indigenous content and knowledges into their curricula (as appropriate for the discipline).*

**Summary of Progress:**

- Not currently required in all programs, but the following are offered:
  - [Mandatory course on Aboriginal and Indigenous Law in Context](#) for first-year Law students.
  - [JD Certificate and Aboriginal and Indigenous Law.](#)
  - Indigenous Studies Minor and Major (pending) in FASS.
  - [Indigenous Health programming and resources.](#)

**29. Recommendation:** *Support instructors to integrate Indigenous pedagogies into the teaching and learning environment.*

**Summary of Progress:**

- Hired Educational Developer, [Indigenous Knowledges and Ways of Knowing.](#)
- Engaging Indigenous Knowledges & Decolonial Pedagogies course.
- Teaching in the Era of Reconciliation Lunch and Learn.
- Participating in ED Indigenous Knowledges Action and national Indigenous Curriculum Specialist Network.

**30. Recommendation:** *Support all Dalhousie students, regardless of degree program, in developing intercultural competence (including a specific focus on Mi'kmaq and other Indigenous cultures) as a universal graduate attribute.*

**Summary of Progress:**

- See progress on Recommendation 28.

**31. Recommendation:** *Provide experiential learning opportunities for students at all levels to engage with communities.*

**Summary of Progress:**

- Study Abroad program to New Zealand and pursuing others through the Office of Government and Global Relations.

**32. Recommendation:** *Work with Indigenous communities (particularly within Mi'kma'ki) to develop community-based credit programming that meets the needs of both local communities and Indigenous students.*

**Summary of Progress:**

- Began discussions with OLCD faculty, the Truro Expansion Committee and the Millbrook Band on this recommendation.

**33. Recommendation:** *Further develop current Indigenous Studies programming to offer an undergraduate major, as well as developing, in the longer term, graduate programming at the master's and PhD levels.*

**Summary of Progress:**

- FASS is in the process of replacing two DDFA tenure-track positions in Indigenous Studies. An Indigenous Studies program taught primarily (or exclusively) by Indigenous faculty will require several more full-time faculty professors.
- Overlap with progress on Recommendation 28.

**34. Recommendation:** *Support the adoption of 'Indigenous research across the disciplines' as one of Dalhousie's emerging areas of research excellence.*

**Summary of Progress:**

- Dalhousie's 2023-2028 Strategic Research Direction *Inclusive Impact* highlights *Indigenous Health & Well-being* and *Reconciliation and Indigenous Peoples* as two areas of research focus. Decolonization and Indigenization are guiding principles for the direction and Indigenous ways of knowing are valued as a component of research excellence.

**35. Recommendation:** *Expand and support Indigenous research capacity.*

**Summary of Progress:**

- Faculty *evidence*
  - Dalhousie is currently exceeding CRC's targets for Indigenous Chairholders (4.9% by December 2029; Dal's representation is 8.9%).
  - Tier II Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Governance.
  - Tier II Canada Research Chair in Reconciliation, Gender and Identity.
  - Tier II Canada Research Chair, Indigenous Peoples Health and Well-Being.\*
- Support for undertaking Indigenous research
  - Indigenous Research Facilitator position in the Office of Research Services established (currently vacant - search in progress).

*\*Established prior to 2018.*

- Indigenous Research Advisor position within Ocean Frontier Institute established.
- Creation of [Indigenous Research Resources Information Hub](#) with guidance for Indigenous community engagement, Indigenous research ethics, Indigenous research methods and data management, governance and sovereignty. Link circulated in weekly ORS newsletter.
- CIHR Nursing Chair: Indigenous Health Research.
- Supporting Indigenous pathways into research.
- See progress on Recommendations 16 and 17.
- Creation of [Mawkwil~mn~j – Let’s Look for it Together – An Indigenous Community Research Partnership Seed Fund](#).

**36. Recommendation:** *Partner with Indigenous communities to advance research and scholarship.*

**Summary of Progress:**

- Creation of [Mawkwil~mn~j – Let’s Look for it Together – An Indigenous Community Research Partnership Seed Fund](#).
- [Cities and Environment Unit](#) engaging Indigenous communities in the community planning process.
- [Community Eelgrass Restoration Initiative](#).
- [Jiksitatulti’kw](#): “listening to each other.”
- [The Project ̄OŌŁ̄+ Ärramät](#).
- Dalhousie is an Indigenous Works [Luminary Academic member](#).
- [Advisory Committee on Indigenous Engagement in Ocean Research](#) for the Ocean Frontier Institute (OFI) established.\*
- [Fish-WIKS research project](#).\*
- [Dalhousie Centre for Water Resources Studies](#) First Nations Safe Water and Wastewater Initiative and Nunavut Wastewater Treatment Program.\*
- [Wabanaki Labrador Indigenous Health Research Network](#).\*

**37. Recommendation:** *Transform the research environment on campus to support Indigenous research.*

**Summary of Progress:**

- Supporting the research community to understand Indigenous research methodologies and ethics:
  - Members of the [Dalhousie Research Ethics Boards](#) are required to complete the [Fundamentals of OCAP® training course](#).
  - 31 VPRI staff, including managers, have completed and 19 more are enrolled the [Fundamentals of OCAP™](#) online course.

*\*Established prior to 2018.*

- All Ocean Frontier Institute (OFI) staff, including managers, have completed the on-line training program The Path: Your Journey Through Indigenous Canada (c NVision Insight Group Inc.).
- Indigenous (Inuit, Métis, and First Nation) [Engagement Guide](#) developed by OFI which is available worldwide through the UNESCO (IOC) Ocean Best Practice system.
- [Advisory Committee on Indigenous Engagement in Ocean Research](#) for the Ocean Frontier Institute established.\*
- Support for faculty engaged in Indigenous research as it pertains to supporting research funding processes:
  - [Indigenous Research Facilitator](#) position in the Office of Research Services established (currently vacant - search in progress).
  - Creation of [Indigenous Research Resources Information Hub](#) with guidance for Indigenous community engagement, Indigenous research ethics, Indigenous research methods and data management, governance and sovereignty. Link circulated in weekly ORS newsletter.
  - ORS reviews funding applications that include Indigenous community engagement and helps to direct researchers to appropriate resources and supports.
  - [Indigenous Engagement Strategy](#) embedded in Transforming Climate Action CFREF.
  - Committees have been initiated that include University and Indigenous Community-based representatives, that are reviewing institutional processes toward considering connection with Indigenous communities. This work is providing preliminary guidance toward building extensive consultation, broader committee formation, and engagement in informing a future Indigenous Research Policy Framework.