




University  
of Manitoba

# TIME FOR ACTION

University of Manitoba  
Truth and Reconciliation Framework





This document  
has been optimized  
for Accessibility.

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**MOMENTUM**

This plan aligns with the  
University of Manitoba  
Strategic Plan 2024-2029

## Message from Knowledge Keeper Leslie Spillett

Wachay — Giizhigoowayaabikwe, Muskwa doodom, Opaskwayak

I am grateful for this gift of life and for the abundance of creation upon which the law of Wāhkohtowin is rooted. In that way, I acknowledge those who have led this work of Reconciliation over the past several decades.

Years ago, my friend from Poundmaker Cree Nation shared about the making of Treaty 6. He shared that over 2,000 Cree people were camped on one side of the Qu'Appelle River, while Alexander Morris and other Crown representatives were on the other bank. Before any discussion took place, the pipe was shared acknowledging that in the presence of the pipe the truth must be told and any commitment made must be kept.

As Nations of all treaty territories, Indigenous Peoples have kept this promise.

The work of the Reconciliation Advisory Committee, whose efforts helped bring this Framework to life, began in the presence of the pipe. Just like our ancestors did, we each made a commitment to truth-telling and to honouring a shared set of values. It has been an absolute honour to have been a small part of the creation of this Truth and Reconciliation Framework.

It is important to acknowledge all of those who poured their love into this Framework—the many voices who shared their experiences, vision and time, including our leadership: first, Dr. Catherine Cook and now, Angie Bruce. It is also important to hold in our hearts all the survivors of the violence of failed institutional law and policy. As well, it is important to honour the kind and enduring guidance of our brother the Honourable Murray Sinclair. These voices are now embedded within the document and its title: “Time For Action.”

One may say the easy part is done, but the action part is where, to use an old saying, “the rubber hits the road.” Success will be built on love, relationship, trust, truth-telling and promise-keeping. It is the work of warriors—those who lead, listen, act and take full responsibility for what we do right, what we get wrong and what we fail to do. I am deeply encouraged by the path the University of Manitoba is taking.

Every single person has a responsibility to contribute to end the ongoing institutional violence of the colonial project. I can hear the echoes in this call: “Times up. Time for Action.” from all those who have now walked on — we do it for them, for the ones who are here now and for those who are still coming.

Can you hear it, too?

Ekosani,

**Leslie Spillett**, Knowledge Keeper



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## Message from the Co-Sponsors Angie Bruce, Vice-President (Indigenous) and Jeff Leclerc, University Secretary

As we continue this journey of Truth and Reconciliation, we are reminded of the deep importance of understanding who we are, where we came from and our responsibility to actively participate in dismantling barriers that have long been overlooked. It is crucial to emphasize that truth is a fundamental part of Reconciliation. We must build a deep understanding of the truth, acknowledging the past and the work that still needs to be done. Our commitment to Truth and Reconciliation at UM is relentless, and we are grateful for the efforts and dedication of everyone involved in this journey so far.

The work of decolonization is essential, and it requires us to recognize existing inequities to be able to challenge stereotypes and colonial systems that have been accepted without question. This work demands training to identify these inequities and the bravery to put our awareness into action.

At UM, we are positioning ourselves to recognize and celebrate Indigenous excellence. Reconciliation is a pillar of our institution, and we are committed to living up to our responsibilities as treaty people. This requires us to strive for deeper, mutually beneficial connections and to uphold our legal and moral obligations.

Our commitment to Truth and Reconciliation is about fostering strong, respectful relationships in everything we do. This commitment is foundational to our work and is not a checkbox to be ticked off. We approach this work with a spirit of action and a forward-moving mindset, knowing that there is much to learn and much to grow.

We acknowledge that we do not always get it right, but we are committed to centering strong, respectful relationships in all our endeavours. Understanding Reconciliation is a key pillar of Indigenous excellence and is foundational to our mission. We are affirming the power and benefit of higher education, while recognizing the need for change.

We encourage everyone to engage with this document from their own perspective, whether Indigenous or non-Indigenous, as it may hold different meanings for each of us. We are committed to enabling and inspiring our community to create the biggest impact possible through education, research and support.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who has contributed to this work, from those who started this journey decades ago to our current UM community. Your dedication and hard work have laid the foundation for the progress we are making today.

This Framework is call to action and a challenge to all members of the UM community to recommit to building strong, respectful relationships, and to co-create spaces, places and structures where Indigenous excellence centres who we are and what we do. As we move forward, let us continue to ask tough questions, make necessary changes and support each other in this important work. Together, we can build a more inclusive and respectful community, honouring the past and building a brighter future for all.

Thank you for your commitment to Truth and Reconciliation.

Miigwech. Maarsi. Nakurmiik. Ekosi. Wopida tanka. Thank you. Merci.

**Angie Bruce**, Vice-President (Indigenous)  
**Jeff Leclerc**, University Secretary



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## PURPOSE

The University of Manitoba (UM) has an ongoing commitment to Reconciliation, actively recognizing and taking meaningful action to address past and ongoing harms. As the home to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, UM carries an obligation to move Reconciliation forward. UM aspires to be the national leader for advancing Reconciliation and through that, supporting the self determination and sovereignty of First Nations, Métis and Inuit, that is, supporting their decisions about matters that affect their lives.

To achieve such a goal, this university—and each member of the UM community—must be agents of change. All must promote, support and work in good ways with the Indigenous community at UM and beyond.

The Truth and Reconciliation Framework (Framework) serves as a guiding document for UM's ongoing commitment to working with First Nations, Métis and Inuit students, faculty and staff. The Framework provides the high-level vision and guidance to champion a university-wide Reconciliation Implementation Plan in 2025. It will act as a foundational guide for academic and administrative units to develop their own Reconciliation action plans, enabling them to identify specific actions, and evaluation and accountability tools and mechanisms. Each action should align with the commitments outlined in this document, with an expectation of measuring their progress and demonstrating accountability. These actions will drive UM's commitment of advancing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action and interweave Indigenous ways of knowing and being into all aspects of UM's practices.

The Framework is shaped by community engagement and builds on decades of work led by Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Holders, students, faculty, staff and community members. The Framework is further informed by the Indigenous Senior Leadership Report and Recommendations, as well as the *MOMENTUM: Leading Change Together 2024-2029 strategic plan*. While significant progress has been made in recent years to address organizational and structural gaps and barriers at UM, significant work remains.

Each of us has a part to play in advancing Reconciliation. Reconciliation is work that non-Indigenous people must engage in. Now is the time for UM to take meaningful steps forward. The Framework represents a commitment to transforming UM's systems and structures, ensuring we recognize, respect and value the cultural identity and knowledges of First Nations, Métis and Inuit and communities. Together, we must continue to move from words to action.

**For this framework, the Advisory Committee is informed by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) description of Reconciliation:**

Reconciliation seeks to establish and maintain a mutually respectful relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, which requires an awareness of the past, an acknowledgement of the harm that has been and continues to be inflicted, atonement and justice for the causes and action to change behaviour. It is a collective responsibility that requires the active participation of our entire community.



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Tipi raising in front of Migizii Agamik—Bald Eagle Lodge during Homecoming 2019

## WHAT GUIDES THE FRAMEWORK

### Territory Acknowledgement

The UM campuses are located on original lands of Anishinaabeg, Ininewak, Anisninewuk, Dakota Oyate and Dene, and on the National Homeland of the Red River Métis.

UM respects the Treaties that were made on these territories, acknowledges the harms and mistakes of the past and present, and dedicates itself to move forward in partnership with Indigenous communities in a spirit of Reconciliation and collaboration. The UM Territory Acknowledgement continues to evolve as we learn more and strive to do better.

UM recognizes that this acknowledgment only holds meaning when reflected in the actions taken to address the injustices and structural barriers that continue to oppress Indigenous people. Colonization, including anti-Indigenous racism, oppression and cultural erasure was and continues to be a systemic and intentional targeting of First Nations, Métis and Inuit, disproportionately impacting their health, education, languages, economic prosperity and more. Respectful of the territories and lands on which the university community learns, conducts research and engages with external partners, UM is guided by this acknowledgment in carrying out the core work of its mission, the priorities it sets and the decisions made to move forward.

### Framework Vision

UM aspires to be a university enriched and shaped by Indigenous cultures, languages and knowledges, becoming the preferred choice for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students, faculty and staff. It will be a place where Indigenous Peoples see themselves reflected and Indigenous ways of knowing and being thrive across all aspects of university life. Through the renewal of right relations UM will contribute to a better way of life for all.

To achieve this vision, the Framework promotes the Ininewak and Métis principle of Wâhkohtowin, a law which describes the kinship structures that inform and govern human behaviour, and interconnectedness between both human and non-human relationships—the spiritual domain, the land, waters and all living beings. It involves a deep understanding of how we relate to and are related to one another, and the resulting obligations and accountabilities we have for each other. Wâhkohtowin helps us see and know how our UM community and the land we teach and learn on can be strengthened through relationship, respect, reciprocity, visiting and ongoing learning.

First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples have unique spiritual and human laws that govern individual and collective human relationships. These laws are the foundation of Indigenous world views and are embedded in languages, in legends and in spiritual practices (ceremony). The power of these views has ensured the resilience, the survival, and indeed, the resurgence of Peoples and Nations.

Our pathway to Reconciliation must and will be guided by acknowledging and embracing Wâhkohtowin—that our mino-pimatisiwin (living in a good way) and collective wellness (and future), both human and other than human (the earth) must be grounded in collective responsibility to one another.



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“Today it is translated to mean kinship, relationship, and family as in human family. But at one time, from our place it meant the whole of creation. And our teachings taught us that all of creation is related and inter-connected to all things within it. ‘Wâhkotowin’ meant honouring and respecting those relationships. They are our stories, songs, ceremonies, and dances that taught us from birth to death our responsibilities and reciprocal obligations to each other. Human to human, human to plants, human to animals, to the water and especially to the earth. And in turn all of creation had responsibilities and reciprocal obligations to us.”

— Métis Elder Maria Campbell

### **Framework Mission**

UM fosters a culture that encourages and enables justice and action and, creates working and learning environments where First Nations, Métis and Inuit students, faculty and staff have a sense of belonging that allows them to thrive, and where Indigenous knowledges are respected and valued.

“Education is the key to reconciliation. Education got us into this mess, and education will get us out of it.”

— Senator Murray Sinclair

### **Understanding the Truth**

Truth requires accepting that colonialism is a reality in Canada and is the foundation of many of the systems that guide our society, including UM’s structures. We must learn about the histories of First Nations, Métis and Inuit and understand the truths of the impacts that First Nations, Métis and Inuit have experienced and continue to experience, from residential schools to policies designed to erase their historical and contemporary diversity, cultures, knowledges, languages, rights and even existence.

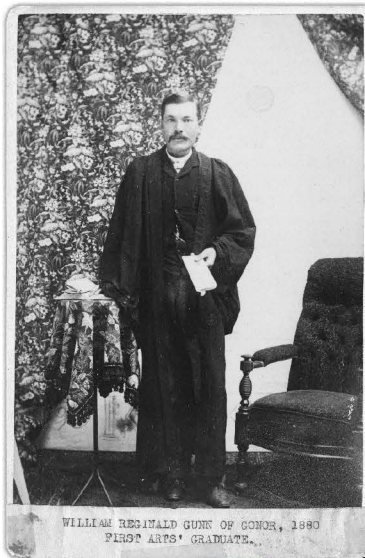
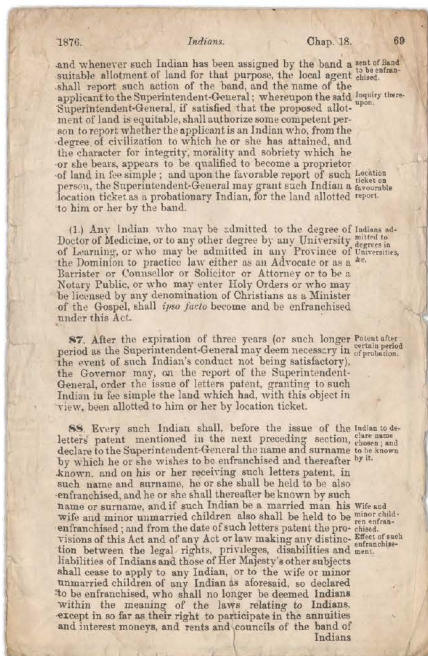
Manitoba has the largest Indigenous population of all provinces in Canada, and Winnipeg has the largest urban Indigenous population of any city in Canada. Therefore, embedding Truth and Reconciliation along with strong, respectful, reciprocal relationships in all we do at UM is critical in a province where our students—both Indigenous and non-Indigenous—will graduate and enter into an economy where one in five coworkers, customers, clients, patients, supervisors and business owners is First Nations, Métis or Inuit.

For much of UM’s history, our university has been in the wrong relationship with First Nations, Métis and Inuit. As a university community, it is important to learn about UM’s colonial and harmful past, as well as the harms and violence of the present, to create and continue to build a better path forward.



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## Native Studies to happen ?



The Indian, Métis, Eskimo Student Association has submitted a proposal for the establishment of a Chair of Native Studies at this university. A Senate ad hoc committee is studying the proposal, and is expected to report shortly.

Ovide Mercredi of IMESA has noted that the presence of the Departments of Judaic, Islamic, and Slavic Studies at the U of M set a precedent. If the university feels it necessary to support these ethnic departments, then it can only follow that studies of Canada's first citizens are eminently desirable.

Anthropology and Education have certain cross-cultural courses in their curriculum that deal to some extent with native

studies. IMESA has found that these courses are not entirely satisfactory, and that they are often open only to a small number of students.

Part of the preamble to the IMESA proposal states that as "first Canadians . . . we are restricted to studying the heritage of our conquerors. If we enroll for those courses which deal rather obliquely with native people, we find that our people and our heritage are studied in most faculties as quaint curiosities of bygone days."

On Feb. 9, IMESA sent a copy of the proposal to President Sirluck, along with a letter urging him to seriously consider the proposal. IMESA

(Cont'd on p. 3)



Clockwise from top left: a page from the Indian Act, 1876; First Métis UM graduate Reginald William Gunn; Chancellor's Hall, the first home of the NCTR; the Honourable Murray Sinclair and former UM President David Barnard at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission signing ceremony; UM alum Marion Meadmore, the first First Nations woman to attain a law degree; Annual Traditional Graduation Pow Wow Dancer; a clipping from *The Manitoban* from March 1972; President Michael Benarroch participates in the land blessing ceremony for the future home of the NCTR; the first students of the Indian, Métis and Eskimo Student Association (IMESA)

## Timeline of Truth and Reconciliation at UM

To gain a deeper understanding of UM's history, here is a list of significant events related to Truth and Reconciliation since the university's inception.

- |                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| <b>1879</b>       | First UM graduate Reginald William Gunn, Métis, earned a degree with honours in Natural Sciences and is awarded the Governor General's Silver Medal.  |
| <b>1880</b>       | Forced enfranchisement of any First Nation admitted to university (Indian Act), meaning students would lose status under the Indian Act and any ensuing rights (e.g., to work and live on reserve). |
| <b>1883</b>       | Endowment (~\$83,000) granted by UM graduate and Métis lawyer Alexander Kennedy Isbister for the education of students of both sexes without distinction of race, creed or nationality.             |
| <b>1885</b>       | Federal government approves legislation granting UM up to 150,000 acres of crown land in Manitoba as endowment; land that was originally promised to the Métis under the scrip system.              |
| <b>1897</b>       | Normal School (Education faculty) opened at the university, which played a role in educating clergy, teachers and politicians who perpetuated the system of assimilation.                           |
| <b>1970</b>       | IMESA (Indian, Métis and Eskimo Student Association) was founded.   |
| <b>1971</b>       | Racist article published in Engineering student paper "The Cursor."   |
| <b>1972</b>       | First Pow Wow at UM.  |
| <b>1973</b>       | First Native Studies course offered called 'Native Views' in response to anti-Indigenous racism.  |
| <b>1975</b>       | Department of Native Studies established.<br><br>UMAP (UM Access Program) established for northern, Indigenous and newcomer students.   |
| <b>1978</b>       | J.A. Hildes Northern Medical Unit serving northern First Nations and Nunavut established.   |
| <b>~1880-1981</b> | UM accepts Indigenous Ancestors, burial belongings and cultural heritage without consent.   |

- 1983** Inner City Social Work Program established as an Access Program.

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- 1985** Engineering Access program (ENGAP) launched.

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- 1990** First Graduation Pow Wow.

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- 1992** Papers of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry are donated to the E. K. Williams Law Library.

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- 1994** Indigenous Business Education Partners (IBEP) launched.

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- 1996** The Aboriginal Student Centre opened in University Centre.

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- 2000** First Indigenous student recruitment officer hired.  
Native Studies establishes MA degree program.

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- 2001** UM, the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and the Foundations for Health create the Centre for Aboriginal Health Research (CAHR), which became known as the MFN CAHR in 2006.

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- 2005** William Norrie Centre constructed using Indigenous design principles.

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- 2008** Migizii Agamik – Bald Eagle Lodge opens.

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- 2010** Indigenous Studies Doctoral Program established.

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- 2011** UM makes formal Statement of Apology and Reconciliation to Indian Residential School Survivors in front of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.  
  
First Executive Lead for Indigenous Achievement inaugurated.

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- 2013** Nursing Access Program (PINE) established.

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- 2014** Indigenous Scholar Hire program launched.

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- 2015** Opening of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) at UM and release of the TRC's final report and 94 Calls to Action.  
  
UM becomes signatory of the Manitoba Collaborative Indigenous Education Blueprint.





- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| <b>2016</b> | Indigenous Initiatives Fund launched.  |
| <b>2017</b> | First Vice-Provost (Indigenous Engagement) inaugurated.<br>The role encountered significant challenges, which eventually led to their resignation, prompting a review of Indigenous Senior Leadership at UM.<br><br>Ongomiizwin opens, merging the Centre for Aboriginal Health Research and The Centre for Aboriginal Health Education. |
| <b>2019</b> | Process to review the role and mandate for Indigenous senior leadership at UM<br><br>Vandalism of NCTR teepee.   |
| <b>2020</b> | First Vice-President (Indigenous) inaugurated.<br><br>Office of the Vice-President (Indigenous) established.   |
| <b>2021</b> | Land blessing ceremony at site of future NCTR permanent building at UM.<br><br>Wawatay Access program established for Indigenous students entering Faculty of Science.   |
| <b>2022</b> | First Vice-Dean Indigenous health, social justice and anti-racism established  |
| <b>2023</b> | Sweat lodge constructed at Fort Garry campus.  |
| <b>2024</b> | Public apology for UM's history related to inappropriate acquisition and housing of Indigenous ancestors, burial belongings and cultural heritage without consent.<br><br>UM Respectful Rematriation and Repatriation Ceremony Policy and Procedures adopted.  |

It should be noted that the above list is not exhaustive. UM's history with Indigenous Peoples is complex, as are each individual's experiences. We encourage further research to expand your knowledge of Truth and Reconciliation at UM, and in Canada.



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An Indigenous student wears the newly designed graduation stole at a 2024 convocation ceremony



## HOW WE GOT HERE

### Community engagement

The Office of the Vice-President (Indigenous) (OVPI) formed a team in fall 2022 following recommendations from UM's Indigenous Senior Leadership Report. The goal of the team was to lead an engagement process to inform the development of a university-wide plan for Reconciliation.

The team organized two large-scale events, bringing together a range of collaborators, including Elders, UM Indigenous students, senior leaders, faculty, staff and Indigenous community members. The first event was focused on providing education around the TRC Calls to Action. The second two-day session brought the same participants together to share broad, university-wide goals, visions, ideas and needs to address the holistic experiences of Indigenous students, faculty and staff. The participants were also encouraged to consider the intellectual, emotional, physical and spiritual aspects of working and learning at the UM.

Other recent university reports, many of which responded to the Indigenous Senior Leadership recommendations, were also vital in shaping this process. The thoughts and suggestions from those reports were echoed by the participants in the community engagement sessions, contributing to the development of the Framework. The reports, which each held their own engagement sessions, can be read on the [OVPI reporting page](#).

In late April 2024, a draft of the Framework was developed, initiating a series of engagement sessions and feedback opportunities that extended until early September 2024. These discussions included meaningful dialogues with students, staff, Elders, Grandfathers, Grandmothers, Knowledge Holders and UM governing bodies. In June 2024, an electronic questionnaire was launched with targeted questions garnering 80 responses. Additionally, a dedicated email account was shared to further facilitate feedback. By mid-September, a "What We Heard" summary, capturing the high-level themes from the rich feedback, was shared with the UM community. This provided another opportunity for input on the final draft. The result of this comprehensive process is the *UM Truth and Reconciliation Framework: Time for Action*.



(from left) Elder Carl Stone and Elder Norman Meade at a town hall for Indigenous Senior Leadership

## Reconciliation Advisory Committee

Equipped with valuable insights from the initial community engagement sessions, Dr. Catherine Cook, the inaugural Vice-President (Indigenous), assembled an advisory committee comprised of UM students, faculty and staff with the mandate of identifying guiding themes to include in the Framework. The advisory committee further refined ideas from those generated during the engagement sessions and identified overarching themes.

The committee's work began with ceremony led by Knowledge Keeper Leslie Spillett. To start the work in a good way, each advisory committee member shared their personal connection to the work and emphasized its significance. Through emotional and vulnerable exchanges, a shared set of values emerged, providing guidance for the committee's work ahead. At the start of each meeting, committee members were reminded of the shared values.

The committee's work is guided by **Ceremony** and **Friendship** and shared values that reflect:

- Reconciliation is about **Relationships** and **Truth**.
- This is “**Heart**” work that requires **Courage** and **Humility**.
- This work is **Personal** and built on mutual **Trust** and **Respect**.
- Indigenous knowledge values of **Common Sense**, **Practicality** and **Reasoning** (as articulated by the late Roger Roulette, Language Specialist, Sandy Bay Ojibway First Nation).



In 2019, UM Faculty of Architecture students worked with community members to design and build the feasting pavilion for Shoal Lake 40 First Nation



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## WHERE WE WANT TO BE

### Walking Together in Reconciliation

Reconciliation is work that non-Indigenous people must engage in. It requires non-Indigenous people to acknowledge historical and current injustices, harms, violence and systemic discrimination against First Nations, Métis and Inuit. It means recognizing and respecting the rights, traditions, languages and cultures of Indigenous Peoples, and requires an intentional commitment to learn, understand, reflect and actively participate in this transformative journey.

As partners, it requires that settlers and non-Indigenous people on these original lands reconcile themselves to the fact that they must do the work to dismantle the colonial systems and structures that reinforce systemic inequalities for First Nations, Métis and Inuit. Through collective efforts, UM can cultivate an environment of reciprocity, respect, understanding and truth, paving the way for meaningful Reconciliation. This process requires a commitment and ongoing efforts from non-Indigenous people and open dialogue between all UM students, faculty, staff and leadership.

It also means that it is crucial to articulate First Nations, Métis and Inuit rights distinctly from equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) initiatives. EDI initiatives aim to create fair and inclusive environments by addressing systemic inequalities and promoting diverse representation. Indigenous and Treaty rights are rights affirmed through Canadian constitutional protections and various treaties, as well as through international mechanisms like the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). This distinction helps to honour the sovereignty and self-determination of Indigenous Peoples, ensuring their rights are not incorporated into broader EDI frameworks and are given focused attention and respect.

Within the UM community, each faculty, college, school or administrative unit is on its own unique Reconciliation path. Some may be in the initial stages of acknowledging truths, understanding and critical reflection, while others may have already developed action plans or started to implement specific initiatives.

Regardless of where academic and administrative units are on this journey, the intent of the Framework is to support the work. It provides a common reference point, or North Star, guiding collective efforts to align with broader Reconciliation objectives and promote the vision of Wâhkôhtowin, and the Framework's principles of respect, relevance, reciprocity, responsibility and relationship.

Combined with *MOMENTUM: Leading Change Together 2024-2029*, academic and administrative units are encouraged to use this framework to align their respective action plans with these overarching commitments to Reconciliation:

- **Integrate Indigenous Knowledges and Ways of Being**
- **Create a Sense of Belonging**
- **Empower Learning**
- **Decolonize and Indigenize Spaces and Places**

Each academic and administrative unit will create action plans that meet these Reconciliation commitments tailored to their own unique context and needs. To support this work, insights from engagement sessions—such as including redesigning curriculum to reflect Indigenous ways of knowing, teaching and learning, and providing education and training for non-Indigenous students, faculty and staff—will be shared in a digital repository for the purpose of supporting the development of academic and administrative plans.



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## HOW WE GET THERE: ADVANCING RECONCILIATION

### Principles

A Five Rs approach to decolonizing and Indigenizing UM's systems and structures pays homage to Verna Kirkness and Ray Barnhardt's (2001) and, later, Jean Paul Restoule's (2008) work in Indigenous education. To ensure that Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing are reflected across UM, each of the Rs must be applied.

The Five Rs approach recognizes the need for the principles of:

**Respect** Indigenous Peoples, knowledges and communities.

**Relevance** to Indigenous students, staff and faculty and their experiences.

**Reciprocity** between teacher and learner, and their teaching and learning experiences.

**Responsibility** to acknowledge and address systemic barriers, injustices and harms and to take action.

**Relationship** between all beings and with the land, and our following obligations and accountabilities to these relationships.

The Métis Nation shares many of the principles captured above to guide their work. Métis principles are rooted in the Laws of Buffalo Hunt and, more recently, the Laws of the Harvest. These principles emphasize the importance of working together (collaboration and respect), honouring responsibilities to both community and the land (responsibility), taking care of the land so that it can, in turn, take care of us (reciprocity and stewardship), taking only what is necessary to support our families and communities (conservation and sustainability), and sharing the harvest (relationship and reciprocity).

The Five Rs are similarly reflected in elements of the eight **Inuit Qaujimjatuqangit (IQ) Principles**, including the concepts of respecting others, relationships and caring for people, and working together for a common purpose.



The annual Elders and Traditional Peoples Gathering is one of many opportunities for students, staff and faculty to learn about First Nations, Métis and Inuit cultures



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## FRAMEWORK COMMITMENTS

Transforming UM's spaces, systems and confronting anti-Indigenous racism and oppression requires time, active engagement with First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities and collaboration to prepare UM graduates to be forward-thinking leaders. To put Reconciliation into action at UM, participants at the initial engagement sessions articulated many innovative ideas, goals and visions captured by the following four commitments and initial actions:

### Integrate Indigenous Knowledges and Ways of Being

Integrating Indigenous knowledges and ways of being to be an integral component of UM's systems and structures acknowledges the richness of First Nations, Métis and Inuit approaches to knowing and being. Respecting the validity of these knowledges, making it necessary to include them in policies, practices, research, governance, support systems and decision-making processes will reshape UM's learning and working environment. This transformation requires rethinking and removing barriers within university systems and structures to facilitate the inclusion of Indigenous knowledges and ways of being.

Indigenous research methodologies are distinct from western research methods because they include community involvement—including the voices of Knowledge Holders, Elders and youth and are based in respectful relationship. This framework values First Nations, Métis and Inuit perspectives in research practices and respects community data ownership and sovereignty, ensuring research benefits the communities involved.

Embracing Indigenous knowledges and ways of being, including Indigenous research methods, supports various TRC Calls to Action, including 10, 53, 62 and 65.

**In advancing the framework, UM will establish an implementation committee that will be tasked with the development of evaluation and accountability tools and mechanisms. The committee will support academic and administrative units to create action plans that include identifying resourcing commitments. They will support UM to communicate annually on progress:**

- Culturally responsive policies and practices.
- Valuing and incorporating Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing in teaching and learning environments.
- Anti-oppression knowledge for non-Indigenous researchers related to First Nations, Métis and Inuit histories.

#### To start, we will:

- Create a Truth and Reconciliation Framework implementation committee
- Safeguard opportunities for Indigenous students, faculty and staff through a university-wide policy and procedures on Indigenous membership, citizenship and kinship.
- Develop, resource and implement a Respectful Rematriation and Repatriation Ceremony Policy and Wise Practices (Procedures).
- Develop an engagement approach to inform a process for evaluating the ethics of Indigenous research projects involving human ethics.



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## Create a Sense of Belonging

Attracting and retaining First Nations, Métis and Inuit students, faculty, staff and senior leadership involves fostering an equitable, respectful and supportive environment that creates a sense of belonging. During UM's community engagement sessions, Indigenous students, faculty and staff shared that they often encounter challenges that undermine their sense of belonging that are rooted in systemic racism. Challenges included insufficient resources and support for Indigenous students, underrepresentation of Indigenous staff and faculty, and culturally ignorant policies and practices.

Actively recruiting First Nations, Métis and Inuit students, faculty and staff is an intentional effort to invite them to share and learn their cultures and languages, and this extends to their families as well. This not only enriches UM campuses with diverse experiences, but also provides perspectives that can be brought back to their communities. Incorporating Indigenous knowledges and traditions enhances UM's understanding, challenges colonial structures, and promotes culturally responsive and inclusive learning and working environments. However, recruitment is just the beginning; retention is crucial. Retention reflects UM's ability to cultivate an environment where First Nations, Métis and Inuit students, faculty and staff are valued, respected, supported and included.

Recruitment and retention efforts are part of a broader commitment to engage respectfully with First Nations, Métis and Inuit and are highlighted in various TRC Calls to Action, including 7, 10, 11, 23, 62, and 63.

**In advancing Reconciliation, UM will acknowledge truths, learn from Indigenous knowledges, address systemic inequities and create a supportive environment where First Nations, Métis and Inuit students, faculty and staff feel a genuine sense of belonging through:**

- Decolonized and Indigenized approaches to student, staff and faculty recruitment, promotion and retention.
- Fostering opportunities to incorporate culture and ceremony in classrooms and workspaces.

### **To start, we will:**

- Improve our understanding of the demographic and geographic composition of Indigenous students, faculty and staff.
- Strategically share more student, faculty and staff stories.
- Establish a repository to capture existing and future ideas to support creating a sense of belonging.



**TIME FOR  
ACTION**

## **Empower Learning**

**Gikendaasowin** is the term used by Anishinaabeg to encompass knowledge and ways of understanding from origins to ways of life. This concept is also embedded within other First Nations cultures, as well as within Inuit and Métis cultures. This includes history, oral traditions, language, legal traditions, technological knowledge and science. In educational settings, it involves integrating Indigenous content into curricula and campus training programs. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action provide guidance, recommending the inclusion of topics such as the history of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Indigenous rights, Indigenous law and Aboriginal-Crown relations.

Indigenous ways of understanding are also deeply interconnected with language, shaping the approach to education and fostering a holistic understanding of the world. Indigenous languages are integral to the preservation and transmission of this knowledge, making language revitalization a crucial aspect of educational efforts.

Skills-based training in cultural safety, language and culture, human rights and anti-racism are highlighted in various TRC Calls to Action, including 1, 13, 14, 15, 16, 24, 28, 57, 62 and 65.

### **In advancing Reconciliation, UM will empower students, faculty and staff to learn and understand Indigenous history and ways of understanding and knowing through:**

- Enhancing curriculum with Indigenous knowledges.
- Language revitalization.
- Supporting culturally responsive and historically accurate training for students, staff and faculty.
- Ongoing anti-Indigenous racism education, awareness and community-building.

### **To start, we will:**

- Initiate a review of curriculum, programs, training and content for opportunities to integrate Indigenous knowledges.
- Identify ways to support Indigenous language teaching and learning.
- Explore approaches to resource initiatives that support advancing the Truth and Reconciliation Framework.



**TIME FOR  
ACTION**

## **Decolonize and Indigenize Spaces and Places**

**Mino-bimaadiziwin** and **mino-ayawin**, the concepts of living well and being in good health respectively, are deeply influenced by the spaces and places in which we exist, including where we learn, teach, work and conduct research. They are entwined with the concept of **Wāhkotowin**, sharing a common thread of interconnectedness and holistic well-being that highlights the importance of relationships and community in achieving a balanced and fulfilling life. They guide individuals and communities in maintaining harmony and respect within their environments. Transforming spaces on our campus to honour these ways of being is crucial and must go beyond tokenistic gestures and toward the well-being of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students, faculty and staff, nurturing body, mind, heart and spirit.

Creating environments that enable individuals to reach their highest potential as balanced beings is essential. This involves inspiring excellence and creativity while nurturing harmonious relationships with all of creation. It encompasses both interior and exterior spaces that support learning, living and ceremony.

Key aspects include incorporating First Nations, Métis and Inuit art and cultural design, establishing spaces free from racism and fostering living environments that promote healthier work-life balances. These efforts benefit all First Nations, Métis, Inuit and non-Indigenous students, faculty and staff.

Reference to decolonizing and Indigenizing spaces and places, as well as important actions from governments to support Indigenous students, are highlighted in various TRC Calls to Action, including 11, 62 and 66.

### **In advancing Reconciliation, UM will be a leader in decolonizing and Indigenizing the campus through:**

- Creating spaces and places for mino-bimaadiziwin and mino-ayawin.
- Exploring culturally responsive housing and support.

### **To start, we will:**

- Engage with First Nations, Métis and Inuit faculty, students, staff and Indigenous communities to listen and learn how to create Indigenous community spaces.
- Develop an Indigenous mental health strategy
- Encourage the integration of Indigenous languages and naming ceremonies to name spaces.



**TIME FOR  
ACTION**

## NEXT STEPS

The completion of this framework marks the beginning of a proactive, forward-looking approach and renewed commitment to Reconciliation at UM. It aims to guide the university's Reconciliation efforts and inform future initiatives, including the development of an implementation plan that emphasizes accountability through regular evaluation, progress reporting and measuring success.

The Framework itself represents a significant milestone in a broader commitment to fostering a better relationship with First Nations, Métis and Inuit students, staff and faculty at UM, as well as the broader Indigenous community. It builds upon past progress while signaling renewed direction. This journey is ongoing and thorough preparation to action change and make a meaningful commitment to true Reconciliation.

As we move forward, our focus will be on executing the initial actions outlined in the Framework to establish a supportive foundation for the work ahead. Simultaneously, an implementation committee will be formed to guide the creation of an actionable plan that translates this framework into concrete steps aligned with its commitments. This will be led by discussions with UM's internal and external community members, including Elders, Knowledge Holders, students, faculty, staff and UM partners, who will all play a crucial role. The implementation committee will lead the development of a plan that will build on the ideas and actions generated from the initial engagement activities, ongoing initiatives and existing reports. Specific goals will be set and a timeline for achieving these goals will be developed.

Evaluation becomes central, comparing actions with initial commitments. Monitoring progress will hold us accountable and reinforce UM's dedication to forging positive relationships with First Nations, Métis and Inuit. The implementation committee's work will focus on supporting academic and administrative units to create action plans with resourcing commitments, develop evaluation and accountability mechanism tools that will help achieve UM's commitments toward advancing Reconciliation. The committee will also provide yearly progress updates, connect back with external First Nations, Métis and Inuit community partners, report on challenges and any needed changes on a dedicated webpage, ensuring transparency and accountability.

As UM continues to advance Indigenous engagement, excellence and equity throughout all aspects of the university, the decades of preceding work by the many First Nation, Inuit and Métis individuals who have brought us to this place in time is gratefully acknowledged.

Now is the time for UM to take big strides forward to advance Reconciliation and ensure First Nations, Métis and Inuit perspectives are valued and included at UM. Reconciliation requires the work of the entire UM community to create an equitable and safe space for all Indigenous Peoples at UM and in the community.

**It is time for action.**



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Led by the Indigenous campus community, UM is committed to ensuring Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing are embedded into the fabric of our teaching, research, administration and governance



## Acknowledgements

Thank you to all the Elders, Knowledge Holders, faculty, staff, students and community members who participated in engagement sessions and provided feedback on the Framework throughout its development. We look forward to future engagement as we move forward in a better way.

Thank you to the Reconciliation Advisory Committee, which reviewed the feedback from the community and provided thoughtful insight to structure the Truth and Reconciliation Framework that will collectively move us to action.

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Knowledge Keeper

**Angie Bruce**

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### **SPECIAL THANKS**

Thank you to Nicki Ferland, Anny Chen, Mark O'Reily (retired) and Dr. Cary Miller who organized and facilitated community engagement sessions to ensure we received feedback from across our community. Dr. Miller also made significant contributions to the writing of the Framework. Thank you as well to Dr. Catherine Cook, the inaugural Vice-President (Indigenous), whose leadership initiated this work. We are grateful to each of them for their time and genuine commitment to this work.



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[UMANITOBA.CA/RECONCILIATION-FRAMEWORK](https://umanitoba.ca/reconciliation-framework)