

Laotsyá:n

The Messenger (On[^]yote'a:ka')

Enoondaajgaazad (Anishinaabemowin)

Peetaachiimuw (Lūnaapéewak)



SHE:KOLI, AANII, KOOLAMALSIHMWA, GREETINGS.

And welcome back to campus! The OII is thrilled that we are finally able to begin in-person learning once again, although we are mindful that the pandemic is not over—which means we have to stay vigilant and continue to observe public health guidelines.

We're proud to present you our second edition of Laotsyá:n, the newsletter of the Office of Indigenous Initiatives (OII). We were very pleased with the feedback we received in response to our inaugural edition in the spring, and we encourage everyone at Western—Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike—to subscribe to Laotsyá:n, share it with friends, colleagues, and fellow students, and send along any queries or suggestions you might have that can help our Messenger resonate more with you.

**Miigwech, baamaa miinwaa,
minwaangozin Enoondaajgaazad.**

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◀ *Christy Bressette and Opiyo Oloya braiding Sweetgrass at Bkejwanong Territory (Walpole Island First Nation).*

Message from the VP-AVP (Indigenous Initiatives)

She:koli, Aanii, Koolamalsihmwa, Greetings

On behalf of everyone at the Office of Indigenous Initiatives (OII), I would like to wish students, staff, and faculty a warm welcome back to campus for the academic year 2021-22. I am delighted to see Western return to in-person learning after a very trying year. As we contend with the pandemic, I would like to remind everyone to be vigilant and mindful of public health guidelines as we interact in person. Getting vaccinated is your best defence. Please be assured that Western is committed to safeguarding the health, safety, and wellbeing of every member of our community, as outlined on [the University's website](#).

Fall is a season of change—especially for a university. As taught by our Elders and Knowledge Keepers, it is important to “walk in balance” at all times. Likewise, OII encourages everyone to live in harmony within all aspects of your experiences here at Western. Central to balance is wellbeing—which includes personal, emotional, and spiritual health. On that note, with a goal to stay well, please be encouraged to access the wide range of general and culturally-relevant supports available to you at Western.

Fall is also a season of beginnings, and there are several recent “firsts” that I would like to highlight and celebrate. In July, RoseAnne Archibald was elected as

the National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations. National Chief Archibald is a member of the Taykwa Tagamou Nation in northern Ontario and is the first Indigenous woman to hold this important position. Like many across Turtle Island, I was delighted to witness her break new ground for so many others.

Also in July, Inuk leader Mary Simon was appointed Governor General of Canada. Her Excellency is from Nunavik, in northern Quebec, and is the former chair of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami. Most significantly, she is the first Indigenous person to hold this prestigious position, and her appointment holds deep significance at this point in the history of Crown-Indigenous relations.

Closer to home, Western is celebrating the appointment of the first Associate Vice-President for EDI-D (Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Decolonization), Dr. Opiyo Oloya. AVP Oloya is a strong advocate for social justice and human rights who came to Canada as a political refugee from Uganda. He has an extensive background in education, including as superintendent with the York Catholic District School Board, and I am very proud to work alongside him in advancing inclusion and decolonization at Western.

Finally, my position of inaugural Vice Provost/Assistant Vice-President of Indigenous Initiatives is a “first” at Western. For more details about how I arrived at this place in my life journey, I invite you to read the [story](#) recently published in Western's Alumni Gazette. I resolved to share my story with others to encourage, motivate, and inspire; our paths can be hard at times, but I know from experience that help is around the next corner, so remember to hold fast and not give up.

In my brief time as an administrator at Western, I've met many people who are deeply committed to positive change and reconciliation. This is encouraging, especially as I consider Western's new Strategic Plan (2021) – [Towards Western at 150](#), which places significant emphasis on the ongoing importance of Indigenous initiatives. Page 14 of the plan focuses on “Advancing Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples” with a commitment to increase Indigenous voices and presence across all levels of community life, work, study, and research. Also, there are plans to increase the recruitment of Indigenous students at all levels, as well as among faculty and staff, as a part of the university's efforts to promote Reconciliation.

Working towards these goals will be given special focus at the end of this month, when Western observes the first National Day of Truth and Reconciliation on September 30. A response to Call to Action 80 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, this day is an opportunity for all at Western to reflect on our history and decide how best to move forward. Our role at OII is to facilitate that process in a spirit of openness and goodwill. We are committed to doing our part, and ask that others do theirs, so that we can achieve greater balance and harmony—amongst ourselves, our communities, and with the Earth.

In unity,

Christy R. Bressette
(Neta Noo-Ke Kwe –
Hard Working Woman)



I like to share my story with others to encourage, motivate, and inspire; our paths can be hard at times, but I know from experience that hope is around the next corner, so remember to hold fast and not give up.

About Laotsyá:n

Laotsyá:n is the voice of Indigenous Peoples at Western—students, faculty, and staff. It is designed for all of us, Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike, and speaks to the entire Indigenous experience at the University. Our aim is to inform, enlighten, encourage, and inspire, as well as to heighten awareness of what it means to be Indigenous on campus and in the wider world. Laotsyá:n is divided into five main sections that encompass the breadth of Indigenous life at Western and in the London area.

Eniigaanzijig • Pathfinders

An Anishinaabemowin word for those chosen for their knowledge of the roads, Eniigaanzijig means “the ones who are leading” (On^yote’a:ka’: Lonuthatli’hu:tu:; Lūnaapéewak: Kihkayuwak). Eniigaanzijig at Western are Indigenous people who are in the spotlight for the work they are doing to advance Indigeneity at the University and help implement the Indigenous Strategic Plan.

Thsistó:t^ • Lighting the Fire

Fire is of great ritual significance and practical use in Indigenous cultures, used to cook food, light up the darkness, warm the home, manage the land, and bring together family and community for sharing knowledge and companionship. This On^yote’a:ka’ word means “to stand up the fire” (Anishinaabemowin: Shkodeke; Lūnaapéewak: Wulalohkeew), and this section highlights Indigenization at Western and the wider London community, covering everything from Truth and Reconciliation to Indigenous cultures and histories.

Kihtaachiimwiil • Storytelling

The transmission of knowledge in Indigenous cultures centres on oral traditions, which involve telling stories that have been passed on from generation to generation since time immemorial. We continue this tradition in Laotsyá:n, with Kihtaachiimwiil, a Lūnaapéewak word meaning to tell or recount (On^yote’a:ka’: Watwathkala:tuhē; Anishinaabemowin: Aadsooke). Here we invite Indigenous people to share their knowledge and insights through stories that they received from other Elders, knowledge keepers, and teachers. Stories will follow the rhythm of the year and the gifts that each season brings.

Wampum • News and Events

“Wampum” is a term that originated with the Narragansett language but spread across much of North America. It has now entered English, and it means “white string of shell beads” (On^yote’a:ka’: O’nekolha; Anishinaabemowin: Chi-miigis apikan; Lūnaapéewak: Aanikwaachiimuw). Wampum are used to record treaties and historical events, and they serve other roles as well, such as currency and symbols of authority. In this section we acknowledge the traditional role of wampum by informing you of events that are of interest to Indigenous people and their allies.

Tsi’ Twanakéhle • Community:

Community is what sustains us all, and we dedicate this section of our Newsletter to the Indigenous community at Western, as well as in the London area and beyond. Tsi’ Twanakéhle’ means “where we live” in On^yote’a:ka’ (Anishinaabemowin: Edniziying; Lūnaapéewak: Maawehleewak), and here we will sustain the network of connections that sustain Indigenous students, faculty, and staff by keeping you informed of what is happening in your community.

WESTERN INDIGENOUS PROFESSOR RECEIVES HEALTH RESEARCH GRANT



Diana Lewis, a professor in Indigenous studies and geography and environment, is the proud recipient of a \$1.3 million grant from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). She joins 14 other researchers at Western who were awarded a total of more than \$12 million in the latest round of CIHR funding announced this spring.

Professor Lewis’ area of expertise is the effects of industrial development on Indigenous people. In 2010 she began researching the Pictou Landing First Nation in Nova Scotia, a community that sits near a pulp-and-paper mill that had been discharging effluent into a local lagoon for over 50 years. Using a “two-eyed seeing” approach to knowledge, she combined western methodologies with Indigenous ways

of knowing to research the health effects of the mill’s discharge. Her investigation drew on statistical methods of health evaluation and oral histories of the Nation’s Knowledge Keepers.

Professor Lewis was able to show that the health of local residents had been negatively affected by the operation of the mill. Her work also provided a model for integrating different worldviews, an outcome that has put Professor Lewis’ expertise in demand from other communities. Thanks to the CIHR funding, she will be able to extend her methodology to Cree, Chipewyan, and Métis communities living near oil and gas extraction sites in the Canadian tar sands, and to the Haudenosaunee population adjacent to a landfill site in Toronto.

Yaw^ko, Miigwech, Anushiik, Thank You to our Language Keepers:

On^yote’a:ka’ (Oneida)
Matt Ireland

Anishinaabemowin (Ojibwe)
Monty McGahey II

Lūnaapéewak (Delaware)
Karen Mosko

MELISSA SCHNARR— THE HEAD AND HEART BEHIND HEAD & HEART

The Head & Heart Fellowship Program is a crucial part of Western's commitment to advancing Indigeneity. Established in 2018, the Program provides fellowships to Western students who want to work with faculty in areas of research related to Indigenous Peoples and cultures. Managing the program takes dedication and commitment, two qualities that are possessed in abundance by Melissa Schnarr, Coordinator of Head and Heart. In her own words:

Boozhoo, she:kon. Melissa ndizhnikaaaz. Deshkan ziibi njoondibaa. Mai'ingan ndoodem. I am an Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee writer, community builder and scholar from London, Ontario. I am a band member of Bkejwanong Territory (Walpole Island First Nation) with family relations in Six Nations of the Grand River Territory. Currently, I am a PhD candidate studying Indigenous Education at Western, and I serve as the Chair for the University's Indigenous Writers' Circle. I have worked extensively with Indigenous communities through my time at the Indigenous Education Coalition, N'Amerind



Melissa Schnaar

Friendship Centre and as the coordinator for the Indigenous Academic Tutor Program (a partnership between the Indigenous Student Centre at Western and Thames Valley District School Board). My research focuses on how schooling impacts Indigenous cultural identity. I am also a published author and poet.

Melissa's involvement with Head and Heart dates back to the origin of the program. She was a graduate fellow when it debuted in 2018, and in 2020 she joined as a co-coordinator. This year she assumed all coordinating duties, which means she now oversees the administration of the whole program, including its Learning Circles, and ensures its smooth functioning.

About Head & Heart

The Head & Heart Indigenous Research Fellowship is all about promoting Indigenous academic excellence at Western. It provides students—both at the undergraduate and graduate levels—the opportunity to engage in academic research, join a community of scholars for mutual education and support, and advance their professional development.

Head & Heart fellowships nurture new Indigenous scholars through Indigenous pedagogy in disciplines of their choice. Fellows undertake 10 weeks of research in partnership with professors from the faculty of their choice: Social Science, Education, Arts & Humanities, Information Media Studies, Music, Law, Science, Health Sciences, Engineering, Ivey Business School, and the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry. In addition to engaging in research, Fellows learn various career skills (such as writing an abstract), and participate in weekly Learning Circles with other Fellows—a great way to gain exposure to different areas of Indigenous study, as well as form relationships with other Indigenous students and scholars at Western.

Head & Heart continues to evolve since its debut in 2018. Last year, for example, it opened up the work of Fellows to the wider University through the Symposium, an event that featured presentations of research projects. It also brought undergraduate and graduate Fellows together by integrating their previously separate Learning Circles, and it has established the Head & Heart Repository, a library of all past research projects that is available to anyone in the Western community.

Eligibility and Applications

Fellowships are available to any student at Western who identifies as Indigenous. Applicants do not need to show previous research experience or

be enrolled in a research-intensive program. The value of undergraduate and graduate fellowships is \$7,500 and \$9,100, respectively, and Fellows are required to complete 35 hours of research-related activities per week over a 10-week period, including mandatory participation in co-curricular Learning Circles.

If you are interested in applying for a Fellowship, or just want to know more, keep an eye out for the two Lunch and Learn information sessions that Head & Heart will be hosting this year on the following topics: *What is Indigenous Research?* and *What are Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being?* In addition, Head & Heart will be publishing

a 4-episode podcast about the program in October that will feature the experiences of Fellows and advisors. For updates about the podcast, and about Head & Heart, please visit the Head & Heart web page.

To apply for the 2022-23 academic year, you simply need to download and fill out an application form: indigenous.uwo.ca/research/HH_2021_ApplicationForm-20210326.docx. The application deadline will be published early next year. If you have any questions in the meantime, you can email Melissa Schnarr at mschnar2@uwo.ca. We look forward to you applying to join other eniigaanzijig at Western.

Head & Heart Fellows 2021-22

There are 18 students who received Head & Heart Fellowships for the current academic year, and the range of their research interests reflects the diversity of Indigenous scholarship at Western.

Undergraduate Fellows

- Amanda Morin (Biology): *Microplastics in the Water: Indigenous Storytelling as an Educational Method*
- Brooke Gelinias (Health Sciences): *Health Behaviours and Dementia Literacy among Indigenous Older Adults during COVID-19*
- Camille Duggal (Kinesiology): *Indigenous Hockey*
- Ginger Jenner (Sociology): *Decolonizing Heteronormative Conceptions on Gender and Sexual Identity: Investigating Through an Indigenous Lens*
- Kendrew Jacobs (Kinesiology): *Developing an Anti-Oppressive Preceptor Education Program (PEP) Module*
- Kiana Manitowabi (Sociology and Media, Information & Technoculture): *The Impact of Social Media on Indigenous Youth*
- Matavea Francis (Psychology and Indigenous Studies): *Embodying Health through Art-Infused Practice*
- Samantha Kennedy (Psychology): *Supporting Indigenous Fatherhood: The Journey from Pre-Natal to the 7th Generation*
- Stefania Giesbrecht (Sociology): *Gaakiinawaaya (Relatives)*

Graduate Fellows

- Awasis Dakin (Geography & Environment): *The Creation Story of an Anishinaabe Round House*
- Camille Di Iulio (Education): *MEMEGWAANH, Indigenous Co-Curricular Honour Program*
- Danica Pawlick-Potts (Library & Information Science): *Can We Make Kin with the Machines: Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Artificial Intelligence*
- Jennifer Komorowski (Centre for the Study of Theory and Criticism): *The Evolution of Sky Woman Under Colonization*
- Joette Lefebvre (Education): *First Nations Community of Inquiry & Praxis (FNCIP)*
- Joyla Furlano (Neuroscience): *Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion at the Ivey School of Business: A Principles Guide*
- Lillian Woroniuk (Education): *Land Pedagogy Resurgence - First Nations Education during the Pandemic*
- Tara Hedican (Education): *First Nations Community of Inquiry & Praxis (FNCIP)*
- Wanda King (Education): *Storytelling as an Indigenous methodology: Indigenizing STEM education*

TRC 80 AND NATIONAL DAY FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

Illustration by Frank Neufeld, inspired by the Brentwood Box



For the first time in its history, Canada will observe a holiday dedicated to formally acknowledging the injustices inflicted on Indigenous people at Indian Residential Schools. In June of this year, September 30 was declared a statutory federal holiday—National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (NDTR)—with the passage of Bill C-5. This step was taken in response to Call to Action 80 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC), which asked that such a day be set aside for honouring the Survivors of Residential Schools, commemorating those who never returned, and advancing Truth and Reconciliation.

The call for the establishment of a statutory holiday is best understood in the wider context

of the TRC. Established in 2008, the TRC has framed the national conversation around Residential Schools and their legacy. The Commission was headed by Justice Murray Sinclair, the first Indigenous person appointed to the bench in the province of Manitoba. Justice Sinclair was later appointed to the Canadian Senate, and in 2021 he assumed the role of Chancellor of Queen's University. Under Justice Sinclair's leadership, the TRC documented the history and ongoing impact of the Residential Schools on Indigenous children, families, and communities. Over six years, the TRC travelled across Canada to hear the testimony of more than 6,500 witnesses, including Survivors, who described the impact of Residential Schools on Indigenous people.

In June of 2015 the TRC

released an executive summary of its findings, together with 94 Calls to Action related to reconciliation between Indigenous Peoples and Canadians. These are divided into a number of sections, such as Justice, Child Welfare, Language and Culture, and Health. Call to Action 80 is one of five Calls to Action devoted to Commemoration that involve such measures as establishing Residential School monuments in every provincial and territorial capital, dedicating arts funding for projects contributing to reconciliation, and integrating Indigenous perspectives into the process of historical commemoration.

While the TRC has completed its mandate, its work lives on. To learn more, visit the archived version of the [TRC website](#).

ORANGE SHIRT DAY: A MEMORY THAT BECAME A MOVEMENT

September 30 was chosen for National Day of Truth and Reconciliation for a very specific reason: it coincides with Orange Shirt Day. Since 2013, Indigenous people and their allies across the country have come together at the end of September to remember the abuses committed at Residential Schools, and to celebrate Indigenous resilience in the face of generations of injustice. Significantly, Orange Shirt Day is a grassroots movement that started out simply with an Indigenous woman recounting her own memory of Residential School.

Phyllis Webstad is Northern Secwepemc (Shuswap) from the Stswecem'c Xgat'tem First Nation and lives in Williams Lake, B.C. When the Truth and Reconciliation Commission came to where she lived, she was invited to speak about her experience with the local Residential School. Unsure of what to say, she chose to tell the story of getting ready to go to school for the first time. Her loving grandmother took her into town and encouraged her to choose a new outfit to wear on her first day; she picked out an orange shirt with a lace-up front, which she wore proudly to school when it opened.

Unfortunately, it was the last time she would ever see the shirt. The school took



Design by Shana Elijah-Thomas/Twin Bears Design

away the clothes the children wore and gave them donated clothing. For Phyllis, the removal of the shirt came to symbolize everything about her experience at the school: a sense of powerlessness, emotional indifference, and psychological abuse. When she recounted the story, it struck a chord with people, and in 2013 Indigenous people and their allies in Williams Lake observed the first Orange Shirt Day. Phyllis began to receive requests from other communities in B.C. to tell her story, and soon interest was sparked across the country. Orange Shirt Day became a rallying point for Indigenous people throughout Canada to commemorate their loss and celebrate their

resilience. And today, the **Orange Shirt Society** is a non-profit organization with three objectives:

- To support Indian Residential School reconciliation
- To create awareness of the individual, family and community inter-generational impacts of Indian Residential Schools through Orange Shirt Society activities
- To create awareness of the concept of "Every Child Matters"

The Society also sells orange shirts and pins on its website, with proceeds helping to run the Society and promoting its mission.

This is t'á' • Lightning the Fire
(On'yote'a:ka): to stand up the fire

ELDER SPOTLIGHT

In each issue of Laotsyá:n, we spotlight the teachings from a local Elder. In this edition, Laotsyá:n features the teachings of Elder **Michael Hopkins, Sr.**—Ogema Benese.



Michael Hopkins, Sr. is a member of the Delaware Nation, Bear Clan. He has been following a way of life rooted in Indigenous knowledge and traditions for over 35 years. He is a carrier of the pipes, and he conducts various ceremonies and teachings that transmit an Indigenous worldview to new generations. Michael is also a survivor of the Indian Residential School known as Mush Hole, Mohawk Institute in Brantford, Ontario.

Michael has studied at the University of Minnesota (Detroit Indian Health Center), Loyalist College (First Nations Technical Institute), and George Brown College (Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres). Since 2008 he has served as Coordinator, Indigenous Healing and Wellness Program at the N'Amerind Friendship Centre in London. Michael has 8 children, 29 grandchildren and 1 great-granddaughter.

I WOULD LIKE TO PRESENT THIS KNOWLEDGE TO YOU.

We all have responsibilities to understand the basic teachings of our ancestors: the Wind, Fire, Rock, Water and the Natural Laws of Creation. We make a choice to pursue this knowledge from many sources. It is important to understand the intricacies of creation as our mind, body, spirit, and heart have an innate connection to all of creation. Clan systems, prophecies of

the old ones, ways of being and knowing, and our original teachings have been passed down from generation to generation. This is how we will ensure that the human race will live in harmony with nature, taking care of the earth and in turn the earth taking care of us. Always acknowledge and give thanks for all we are gifted with."

THE BIG DRUM: CENTRAL TO INDIGENOUS CEREMONY AND SOCIETY



Eagle Flight Singers at 2019 Western Convocation Ceremonies

On many occasions, we invite Indigenous drummers and singers to campus. And almost as often, we get questions: who are the performers? What role do drumming and singing play in Indigenous society? What is the cultural significance of Indigenous drumming and singing? To answer these questions, we recently spoke with Gordon Nicotine-Sands, a fourth-generation singer originally from Bkejwanong territory and the Poundmaker Cree Nation in Saskatchewan. Gordon leads Eagle Flight Singers, a First Nations singing group from London that has been active for over two decades.

Gordon explained that singing and drumming is an ancient practice that is widespread among the First Nations of Turtle Island. It originated in ceremony, and it varies from culture to culture. Nations around the southern Great Lakes tend to use larger

drums, for example, while those of the Haudenosaunee typically use a Water drum that is smaller in size. The skin of the drum is usually deer or moose hide, and it is stretched around a designed wooden shell. It is given the name "Big Drum."

Singing and drumming that is ceremonial is held in private. When it is public, it typically occurs at social events, the best known of which are pow-wows. Modern pow-wows are practised across Turtle Island and include a wide range of peoples and cultures. They are a way of bringing people together for a variety of reasons and occasions, and involve public dancing. Dances can range from the purely social to the competitive, and can be fast or slow, depending on the rhythm of the drum and the singing. Every song begins with a lead singer, with others who then join in and sing in unison. The number of singers

varies, from as few as four to as many as 12 or more.

Singing and drumming are physically demanding, performed with an intensity that is meant to invoke the spirit of the listener. Songs typically comprise four to six verses, and each verse is sung four times over. Singers and drummers bring great skill and knowledge to their art, and are compensated by their host when they perform at social events. Western has often invited Gordon and Eagle Flight Singers to a variety of on-campus occasions, such as graduations, event openings, and commemorations, and the group performs singing and drumming for the University that sometimes includes an honour song, to bring good blessings. Look for the Big Drum (and Eagle Flight!) at special events hosted by OII.

FEED YOUR SOUL WITH STORYTELLING

If you want to connect with Indigenous storytelling at Western, you'll want to follow two series that provide regular stories throughout the year: *Indigenous Voices* and *Smoke Signals*.



Illustration by Jim Oskeegish



INDIGENOUS VOICES

In this series, OII invites Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Teachers to share with Western the knowledge of our ancestors, accumulated over the generations. Each month we focus on a different theme, disseminating Indigenous ways of knowing and being that are embodied in our stories. Themes follow the cycles of the year and the rhythms of the season. In August we focused on *Two Spirit Truths*. Our upcoming themes are **Child Welfare: the new Residential School** on September 29th; *Trick or Treaties* in October; and *Dreams* in November. Further information on Indigenous Voices can be found on the [OII website](#), as well as in the ISC newsletter and social media channels.

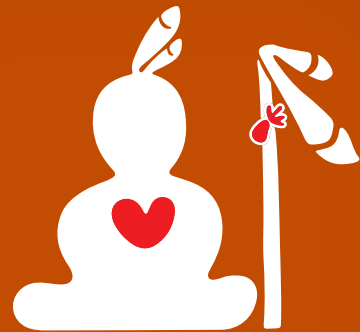
SMOKE SIGNALS

Sundays between 6:30 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. is your time to connect with the stories, insights, and wisdom of two Indigenous Elders on Radio Western, Mary Lou and Dan Smoke. Their ongoing program is called **Smoke Signals**, and each week they provide a great way to connect with Indigenous themes and issues on Radio Western, at 94.9 FM. Make them a regular part of your weekend to connect with the Indigenous community at Western and in the London area.



Please note that the Mbwaach'idiwag podcast series is at present on hold, as the production team manages other responsibilities at OII. However, you can still listen to previous podcasts on the [Mbwaach'idiwag home page](#). We will let everyone know when the series resumes next year.

SEPTEMBER 30—NATIONAL DAY OF TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION



NATIONAL DAY FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

Icon Design by Isaac Murdoch

In June of this year, September 30 was designated as National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (NDTR)—a statutory federal holiday that responds directly to Call to Action 80 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC). OII welcomes the fulfilment of Call to Action 80. It represents an opportunity to raise awareness of the TRC and its findings, and to advance Truth and Reconciliation at Western and beyond. We invite all students, faculty, and staff to

join in observance of NDTR across the campus.

To facilitate this observance, OII has developed a **programme of events for September 30**. It has been designed with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous members of the Western community in mind. In addition to honouring Survivors and celebrating the resilience of Indigenous people in the face of trauma, it will provide opportunities for education and reflection in a spirit of reconciliation.

To assist the Western community in observing this day of reflection, we provide here a short list of reading resources that can aid understanding of Truth and Reconciliation.

- *The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*
- *The Final Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*
- *Mush Hole: Life at Two Indian Residential Schools*, compiled by Elizabeth Graham
- *"If we had only known... whistle blowers, Florence Nightingale, and residential schools,"* by Thomas Peace
- *The Sleeping Giant Awakens: Genocide, Indian Residential Schools, and the Challenge of Conciliation*, by David B. MacDonald
- *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879-1986*, by John Milloy
- *21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act*, by Bob Joseph
- *The Inconvenient Indian*, by Thomas King

LEARNING BUNDLES: A NEW WAY TO ACCESS INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE ONLINE

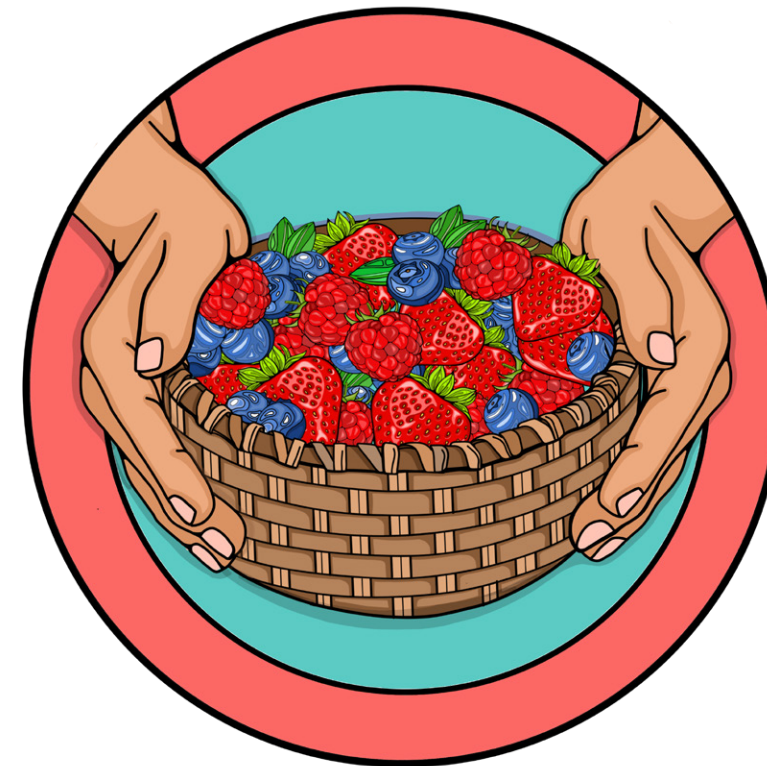


Illustration by Holly Pichette

Education professor Candace Brunette-Debassige has been appointed as the Teaching Fellow (Indigenous Learning) at Western, and as part of the fellowship, she is launching a new project called Indigenous Online Learning Bundles. This is a multi-year project inspired by similar work done at Carleton University. It aims to create a repository of online curriculum resources that embed Indigenous knowledges into university teaching and learning—all of which will be available to Western instructors for use in their course and lesson planning.

"We are calling our project *Maatoo kiiying*

gaamiinigoo wiziying, which means sharing our gifts in the local Anishnabemowin language. Embodied within the Indigenous notion of 'a gift' are relational ontologies and ethical responsibilities to respect the collective nature of Indigenous knowledges, its interconnections with lands and communities and unique sharing practices," said Brunette-Debassige.

The Indigenous Online Learning Bundles project places Indigenous Peoples and worldviews at the forefront of the curriculum and development process. In doing so, it aims to create ethical spaces where Indigenous educators can

work collaboratively to gather and share Indigenous knowledges in ways that adhere to local Indigenous protocols and processes. Various Indigenous scholars and educators will together develop several Online Learning Bundles, dedicated to Indigenous topics/themes that have interdisciplinary application. As part of the project, Brunette-Debassige will also conduct research on Indigenous teaching and learning initiatives at Western, which aligns with her research expertise of Indigenous and decolonizing curriculum in the academy.



READING OF THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION REPORT

The Theatre and Performance Studies Department, together with the postdoctoral fellows at the Western Centre for Sustainable Curating in the Department of Visual Arts, is taking an innovative way to observe NDTR. Beginning on September 29, students and faculty in theatre will perform a durational reading of the Executive Summary of the Truth and Reconciliation Report every Wednesday over several weeks. They have taken their inspiration from recent similar projects, such as the **TRC Reading Challenge** and Theatre Passe Muraille's **reading** of the TRC. Readings are open to the entire Western community, and are scheduled to take place between 11 a.m. and 12 p.m., over Zoom. The first 45 minutes of the session will be devoted to the reading, and the remaining 15 minutes to individual journaling and reflection. To attend, please sign up on the [project's program page](#).



HEALTH AND SAFETY MEASURES ON CAMPUS

While we are all excited about returning to campus for a new academic year, we are unfortunately still contending with the Covid pandemic. Recent figures from Health Canada indicate that we have entered a fourth wave of infections, driven by the more contagious Delta variant.

Given that the situation with Covid continues to evolve, it is important for all members of the Western community to inform themselves of any changes to the University's health and safety requirements. To do so, please check for the **latest policies implemented by Western**. Please also note that Western's vaccination and testing centre is open and available to all members of the University community.

While Western University requires full vaccinations to work and study on campus, it is also important to value Indigenous ways of being and knowing. Indigenous people look to what the Creator and Creation provide to help us through sickness and illness. Remember your medicines. Cedar is a medicinal plant used to treat many ailments including fever, chest cold, and flu-like symptoms. It contains large amounts of vitamin C and will help boost your immune system.

7generations.org/making-cedar-tea/



LEARN FROM A WATER WALKER

Waasekom Niin (Edward George) is a gifted young man from Saugeen First Nation who has developed a unique following of people who have watched him travel across the Great Lakes to raise awareness regarding water. He is known as a water walker: someone who continuously fights through advocacy and education to protect clean, healthy water across Turtle Island. As a young person seeking knowledge, Waasekom shares his perspective on how Indigenous knowledge informs living in balance with the Earth. He will be presenting to PACES, the President's Advisory Committee on the Environment and Sustainability, on October 20, 2021, followed by a Q&A session moderated by the VP/AVP Indigenous Initiatives.

Water is held as a sacred gift by Indigenous people, a spirit to be cherished and protected. Grandmother Josephine Mandamin first started her water walk in 2003, eventually walking around all five Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River, honouring and bringing awareness to water issues. The aim of Waasekom's presentation is to help Western orient its environmental initiatives with an Indigenous perspective.

Water:

Anishinaabemowin – Nibi (nee bee)
Onyota:aka – Ohne:kanus (O nay gun ohs)
Lūnaapēewak – Mbuy (mm bee)



LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION—YOU CAN JOIN IN

As noted in our inaugural Newsletter, Western's Indigenous Strategic Plan made language revitalization a priority. Following on the development of a draft report, the University assembled an Indigenous Advisory Language Group (ILAG) to translate strategy into action, and language revitalization at Western is now moving ahead. The University has hired Gordon Paquette to teach the Introduction to Anishinaabemowin course and Ian McCallum to teach the Indigenous Languages Revitalization courses. Course outlines have been developed, and the courses will run from October 1st to November 15th. There were 20-25 places filled where new language learners will complete assignments and participate in pre- and post-focus groups to help evaluate the courses and inform future offerings. Students will also receive a stipend for participation. The courses were heavily oversubscribed, and we thank everyone for their enthusiasm. Given the interest expressed, we hope that this initiative will be expanded in the future to accommodate all who expressed interest in the inspiring project of reviving our languages.

CEDAR TEA AND STORY TELLING WITH THE VICE PROVOST/ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT (INDIGENOUS INITIATIVES)



As a newly established office, OII is eager to engage with all members of the Western community, as well as those in the wider London area who have an interest in Indigenous initiatives. To advance our outreach, we will be hosting an online cedar tea and Q&A session, sponsored by the Department of Alumni Relations & Development. We welcome students, staff, members of local First Nations, and especially members of Indigenous Alumni at Western to our recently launched alumni chapter for Indigenous graduates.

This gathering will be hosted by Christy R. Bressette, VP/AVP OII. Christy is a Western alumna,

and holds a PhD in education from the University. She assumed her responsibilities in March of this year, and looks forward to hearing directly from Indigenous alumni about their experiences at Western. She also hopes to answer any questions you might have, and will outline her vision for advancing Indigeneity at Western.

Christy will be joined by other Western staff (also alumni), who will share their perspectives on Western and Indigenous identity at the University:

- Paula Hedgepeth, MPEd'19 – Community Relations and Space Coordinator

- Amanda Myers, BA'11, BEd'13, MPEd'20 – Director of Indigenous Student Centre
- Candace Brunette, PhD'21 – former acting VP/AVP Indigenous Initiatives and Special Advisor to the Provost
- Sara Mai Chitty, BA'14, MA'15 - Curriculum & Pedagogy Advisor

We warmly welcome everyone interested in Indigeneity at Western to join us on October 5 from 5:15 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. The event will be virtual, on Zoom, and registration can be completed by [clicking on this link](#).

WHAT DOES INDIGENOUS DESIGN LOOK LIKE?

We are all eagerly awaiting the opening of the Indigenous Learning Space that is coming early next year. Until then, however, how about an architect's sneak peek of what the space will look like? Wanda Dalla Costa, a member of the Saddle Lake Cree Nation and Canada's first female First Nation architect, along with project designer Tierra Miller and OII's Paula Cornelius-Hedgepeth, will introduce it in an upcoming presentation: *A Home Away from Home: Incorporating Indigenous Design at Western University*. The

new space will be housed in the iconic, mid-century Modern Faculty of Education library on Western Road, and will incorporate the work of local Indigenous artists, an outdoor classroom, and ceremonial and healing spaces. The talk, which is sponsored by London Public Library, will outline the plans for the space and the principles of Indigenous design that inform.

The presentation will take place on September 29, between 7 and 8 p.m., on Zoom. To attend, you will need to register on the [program page of the library](#).

Welcome the New Indigenous Student Leaders

With the arrival of a new academic year, we welcome new student leaders who will be assuming their positions in the Indigenous Student Association (ISA). The purpose of the ISA is to promote a sense of community for Indigenous students across campus and contribute to raising awareness and understanding of Indigenous peoples, cultures, and histories. Our new leaders for 2021-22 are:



Misko Kicknosway
President

Boozhoo Misko Banaishe n'dizhinkawz, Wahbashayshe n'doodem, Dishkan Ziibi n'donji. Inuk Anishinabe Mide Kwe n'dow. (Hello, my name is Misko Banaishe. I'm from the Marten clan. I live in London. I am an Inuk, Mide woman). I am in my 3rd year at King's University College with a major in Criminology, and a double minor in Indigenous Studies and Dance. This year I am fortunate to be the President of the Indigenous Student Association (ISA). In my free time I love being outside, and crafting.



Danielle Nicolardi
VP Events

Boozhoo, my name is Danielle Nicolardi and I am a part of Moose Deer Point First Nations in Georgian Bay. I am a 4th year Health Science student and am the Vice President of Events for the ISA. I love being a part of the ISA and being connected to my culture on campus. I'm passionate about the intersections of health, climate, and energy; particularly in Indigenous communities.



Ella Smylie
VP Communications

I'm in my fourth and final year at Western, studying honours business at Ivey. I'm looking forward to assuming the role of Vice President Communications at the ISA. In my free time, I enjoy pottery, thrift shopping, and writing.

Laotsyá:n is published four times a year by the Office of Indigenous Initiatives at Western University. The views and opinions expressed by contributing writers do not necessarily reflect those of the University. If you would like to receive this newsletter regularly, you will need to **subscribe to Laotsya:n**. The current edition is also available on the **OII website**, along with archived editions.

Office of Indigenous Initiatives

The Office of Indigenous Initiatives leads system-wide change at Western University in order to advance Truth and Reconciliation efforts and achieve equitable outcomes for Indigenous Peoples. It plays a lead role in championing Indigenous strategic directions; building collaborative and community-engaged partnerships; and supporting campus partners in implementing Western's Indigenous Strategic Plan.



Indigenous
Initiatives



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