

# Laotsyá:n

## The Messenger (On<sup>^</sup>yote'a:ka')

*Enoondaajgaazad (Anishinaabemowin)  
Peetaachiimuw (Lunaapeewak)*



## She:koli, Aanii, Koolamalsihmwa, Greetings.

The end of the academic calendar brings an opportunity to reflect on a year with many successes. The most significant of these was unquestionably the opening of the Wampum Learning Lodge in November, an event that fulfilled a longstanding commitment of Western to Indigenize the University and its spaces. We are happy to report that the Lodge has seen steady growth in programming since its opening and is quickly becoming the central focus of Indigenous life and culture on campus. A signal event in the Lodge's calendar is Universities Canada's eight annual Building Reconciliation Forum, which we are hosting from June 26 to 28. We invite you to learn more about the Forum in this edition of our Newsletter, and we look forward to welcoming participants at the end of June.

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Looking back, I compare the preparation for those magnificent life-sustaining gardens to the work that we are all doing at Western to further the decolonization and Indigenization that will benefit us all.

## Message from the VP-AVP (Indigenous Initiatives)

*Boozhoo* to everyone, and welcome to the end of Spring – an exciting time of awakening, renewal, and growth. This is a season defined by new beginnings as buds blossom and bloom and newborns grow stronger each day. These are days inspired with hope, growing longer and warmer as all of Creation carries out its original instructions. Spring is filled with expectation as it gives way to Summer, and it renews my excitement for life especially as I reflect on our ancestors who did all they could so we could be here today.

My memories take me back to when I was a child helping my *mishoomis* (grandfather) in the gardens. I recall how much work it was to get them ready, and how we set seeds aside for the next generations. As all gardeners know, preparing the land at the start of the season to receive those tiny, precious grains requires clearing, thinning, burning, raking, and hoeing followed by watering, weeding, fertilizing, and praying. There were many times when we almost lost sight of the reason for all the toil: the delicious harvest, full bellies, and satisfaction of a job done well. When I was tired and unsure, I benefited from my *mishoomis*' timely reminders about how sweet those berries would taste in a pie along with a nice cup of tea.

Looking back, I compare the preparation for those magnificent life-sustaining gardens to the work that we are all doing at Western to further the work of decolonization and Indigenization that will benefit us all. This work is cyclical, requiring resources, energy and encouragement for preparing the ground, planting, maintaining and harvesting—and then repeating. While the toil can be exhausting at times, we all benefit from the growing process and the harvest. Sometimes our work to make the world a better and more equitable place can make us anxious, frustrated, and impatient; but take heart from knowing that this work is difficult and that if we persevere, we'll experience a great harvest that will benefit everyone, in due season.

*Mishoomis* would remind us all that there is a time coming when all the hard work to prepare the land, and plant and grow the seeds of "Truth" and "Reconciliation," will bring a glorious season of healing, rebuilding, and restoration—the necessary steps towards peace, unity, and equality as global citizens in Creator's garden.

*Miigwech,*

**Christy R. Bressette**

(*Neta Noo-Ke Kwe* – Hard-Working Woman)

*“The opening of the Wampum Learning Lodge this past fall was such an exciting event and I have already observed the a remarkable difference this space makes for both faculty and students. OII’s staff have also been great supporters of ongoing projects at the Faculty of Law and have made a significant impact in things like curriculum/pedagogy development and the creation of the Indigenous learning honour.”*

*– Jeffrey Warnock*

## Focus on Faculty—Jeffrey Warnock

Jeffrey (Jeff) Warnock is a citizen of the Métis Nation of Ontario and joined the Faculty of Law in 2021, first as a Visiting Professor and then as an Assistant Professor in 2022.

Jeff holds an undergraduate degree in Political Science from the University of Waterloo, and a J.D. and an LL.M. from Western. Jeff’s LL.M. examined the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the interpretation of the principle of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC), with a particular focus on the relationship between FPIC and Indigenous legal traditions.



Jeff’s research focuses on aboriginal law, constitutional law, Indigenous legal traditions, and public international law (specifically as it pertains to Indigenous peoples). Jeff’s current projects include an examination of Canada’s response to UNDRIP. Jeff has been closely tracking Canada’s commitment to implement the Declaration for years and is particularly interested in Canada’s ongoing consultation and proposed implementation plan for UNDRIP, and the relationship between Indigenous legal traditions and the interpretation of the articles in UNDRIP (particularly the principle of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent). Jeff’s research also explores the future of the duty to consult, section 35 of the Constitution Act, and other aboriginal law concepts.

## Putting the TRC’s Calls into Action

Jeff is the instructor for Western’s mandatory course in Indigenous peoples and the law (which is part of the law school’s response to the TRC’s Call to Action 28), as well as the coach for Western’s *Kawaskimhon* moot team. The *Kawaskimhon* brings together law students from across Canada to participate in a moot that is conducted in accordance with Indigenous customs/protocols and asks participants to focus on collaborative, interest-based negotiations rather than adversarial competition.

Jeff has also collaborated with Western’s Office of Indigenous Initiatives on several projects and has been closely following the work that the OII has been doing in recent years. We are truly fortunate to have such a dedicated faculty member giving voice to Indigenous perspectives at Western.

## A Well-Deserved Retirement for a Good Friend of OII

As a striking new addition to the Western campus, the Wampum Learning Lodge is a great source of pride to so many of us. But there is one person for whom it is not just a source of pride, but a fitting symbol for the end of a great career: Jeff Jones.

Jeff was the construction site manager for the Lodge, and he put his heart and soul into the project. For 32 years Jeff worked at Facilities Management, contributing to, and in some cases overseeing, the development and renovation of such signature campus landmarks as the Biotron, Stevenson Lawson Building, FIMS/Nursing Building, and Thames Hall.

He began his career at Western in 1990 as an Architectural Technologist, and he has held such titles as CAD Operator/Estimator, Furnishings Coordinator, Building Code Specialist/Project Coordinator and finally Project Manager. The Wampum Learning Lodge was the capstone of his career, and we were blessed to have him as our manager.

Through the whole process—which included the long, frustrating days of the early pandemic—he was unfailingly good-humoured, patient and informative, always keeping us apprised of how things were going and always reminding us that there was light at the end of the tunnel. The end result is there for the whole campus to see, and it is a truly great legacy for Jeff to bequeath to Western, to OII and to Indigenous students, faculty, staff, and community members.

*Anushikk, Yawł'ko, Miigwech, Jeff.* Thank you—to you and your team of skilled craftspeople who completed Western's new Wampum Learning Lodge. You have left us a gift that we will treasure down the generations.



## OII Welcomes New Co-Op Student to the Wampum Learning Lodge

The Wampum Learning Lodge has welcomed its first co-op student: Caladen Deagle, from Cowessess First Nation in Treaty 4 territory in southern Saskatchewan. A Grade 11 student at Sir Frederick Banting Secondary School, Caladen's Cree name is *Onitawaskiwiiniw*, which means Explorer of Land, or one who explores. He received his name due to his curious, determined nature, detail-orientedness and connection to the earth.

Caladen is an entrepreneur at heart, having got his feet wet in the world of business from the age of 11. He has run his own babysitting and pet-sitting service, turned his hand to hard and soft landscaping, and worked his way up from dishwasher to food preparer and cook in the restaurant business. After reaching the position of line chef he decided to return to landscaping, where he enjoys connecting with the earth and working in the outdoors and fresh air. (He'll be a welcome addition to our gardening team at the Lodge!)

Caladen hopes to follow in his eldest brother's footsteps and come to Western to study. He chose the Lodge for his Co-Op experience because of the welcoming environment, and looks forward to the opportunities it will provide to learn more about his own culture, network and find his way forward in life as he embarks on his postsecondary journey. We're delighted to have him join our team.

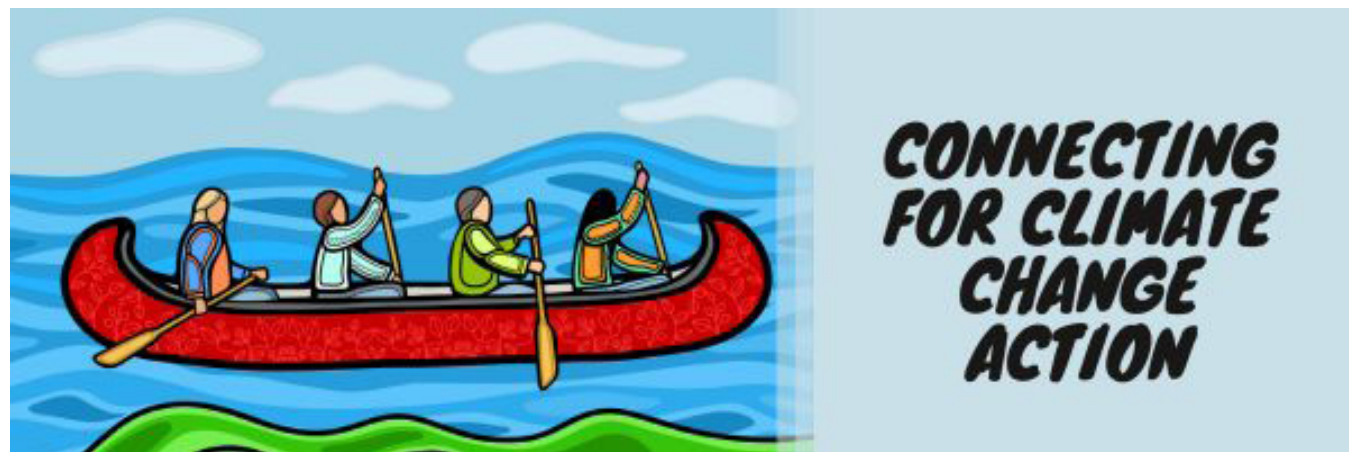


## New Online Course on Climate Change

Connecting for Climate Change Action is a course co-developed at Western by Dr Katrina Moser and Dr Beth Hundey of Geography & Environment; Sara Mai Chitty, OII's Curriculum and Pedagogy Advisor; and Serena Mendizabal, a student-as-partner who graduated this year with her MA in Geography & Environment.

Braiding Indigenous and Euro-Western ways of knowing to engage learners in climate change justice action, and using Indigenous pedagogical approaches, has earned the course Western's Award for Excellence in Collaborative Teaching, and the national D2L Innovation Award for Teaching and Learning.

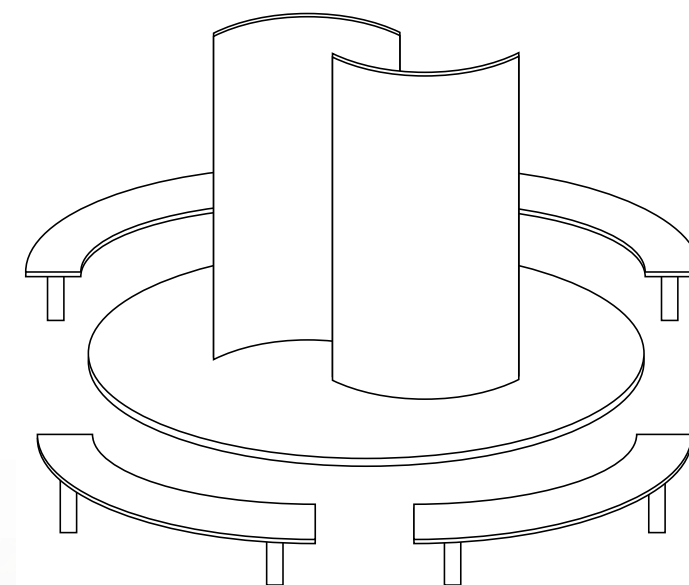
An open and free version of the course is being piloted on Coursera, with 45 people enrolled. Course enrolment will be increased for the fall offering of the course, and members of the public are welcome to join in the learning experience. At Western, undergraduate students can register for GEO 2133 Connecting for Climate Change Action, taught in blended format by Dr Katrina Moser, to receive formal course credit.



## Art at the Wampum Learning Lodge

OII is pleased to announce a new artistic addition to the Wampum Learning Lodge. Western's deans have made a generous donation of 11,000 to the Lodge for an art installation to commemorate the Lodge's opening. Intended also to inspire ongoing reflection and action that advances Truth and Reconciliation, the installation will serve to reinforce the intentionality of the Lodge and enhance its ambience.

The Lodge is a concrete expression of the enduring presence of Indigenous people in this region—Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak and Attawandaron/Chonnocton—both in the past and present. Since its opening, the Lodge has helped to reconnect Indigenous students, as well as surrounding Indigenous communities and organizations, with their cultural traditions and signal that Western is a place that welcomes Indigenous people, voices, and perspectives. The installation will further this role and encourage the Western community to engage in the work of Truth and Reconciliation. OII has developed three options for the deans to consider, each of which is compatible with the design of the Lodge, evokes Indigenous culture and knowledge, and serves as a signpost for people approaching the building. We look forward to revealing the chosen design soon.



Technical Rendering

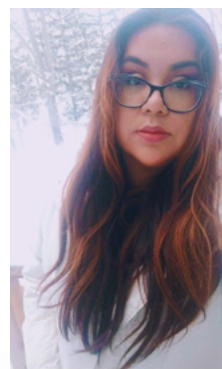
## New Award for Indigenous Law Students

Two Western Law graduates have founded a new scholarship for Indigenous students at the Law School. The Hewat Family Continuing Award for Indigenous Law Students was funded by the husband-and-wife team of Chris (LLB, MBA '85) and Dale Hewat (LLB '86). The award provides \$30,000, spread over three years, for a full-time undergraduate entering Year 1. Granted annually, the scholarship gives preference to candidates who are Indigenous (First Nations, Inuit or Métis) and have demonstrated a contribution to their Indigenous community as well as interest in continuing their contribution to Indigenous communities in the future. To learn more, see the [Law School's website](#) for information on financial aid and awards and Indigenous Initiatives.

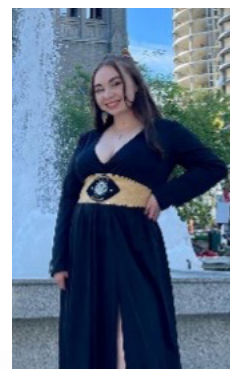
## Dr. Valio Markkanen Award

Congratulations go out to the recipients of the Dr. Valio Markkanen Award for 2023: Laney Beaulieu (undergraduate recipient) and Sara Spence (graduate recipient).

The award of \$1,000 per recipient was established with a generous gift from the estate of Dr. Valio Markkanen, a medical doctor who was well loved in both Canada and the United States. He passed away in 2008 in Windsor at the age of 95, and the award honours his memory as someone who chose a humanitarian profession and brought happiness and warmth to other people's lives. Each year the Markkanen Awards are presented annually to an Indigenous undergraduate and graduate student from Main Campus. Recipients are selected based on a combination of academic excellence, previous or intended contribution to Indigenous communities (on and/or off-reserve), and a commitment to Western's campus community through engagement outside of the classroom. In addition to submitting their transcripts, applicants must provide a letter of reference and a one- or two-page statement outlining how they fit the criteria for the award.



Sara Spence



Laney Beaulieu

Congratulations from OII to Laney and Sara!

## Congratulations to our 2023 Head and Heart Fellows!

This year's Head and Heart Fellowship looks a little different from previous iterations, and not just because it's smaller. We've revamped the program in response to feedback from Fellows and the program coordinators, and the biggest change is that it now spans two summers. Year 1 immerses Fellows in Indigenous research paradigms and methodologies, as well as engaging Indigenous faculty and graduate students in sharing their research and methodologies. In Year 2 some Fellows will be mentored by Indigenous faculty on their own research projects or an existing one, while others will engage in a foundational Indigenous research methodologies program. Some of the activities planned for the annual 10-week duration included a visit to the Oneida Log School and *Ska-Nah-Doht* with educator and Oneida language teacher Lotunt Honyust; and a visit to the land behind the Ivey-Spencer Leadership building with Dr. Desmond Moser and Clint Jacobs, of Bkejwanong First Nation, to learn about the native plant species restoration there.



## New Installation at the Lodge—In the Artist's Words

*Nimkii Giizhis nindizhinikaaz. Ajjak nindoodem.* Whitefish River First Nation *nindoonjibaa*. My spirit name is Thunder Day, I am crane clan and I am originally from Whitefish River First Nation. My English name is Mike Cywink and I currently live in Ingersoll, just outside of London. I work full time out of the Centre for School Mental Health at Western University, supporting Indigenous students throughout the Thames Valley District School Board.

Over the last couple of years, my art career has really taken off. I am extremely humble when it comes to my art. But at the same time, I'm proud of the work I have accomplished. I am trying my best to Indigenize spaces throughout the London area to help break down walls and make better, safer places for Indigenous Peoples.

Representation matters.

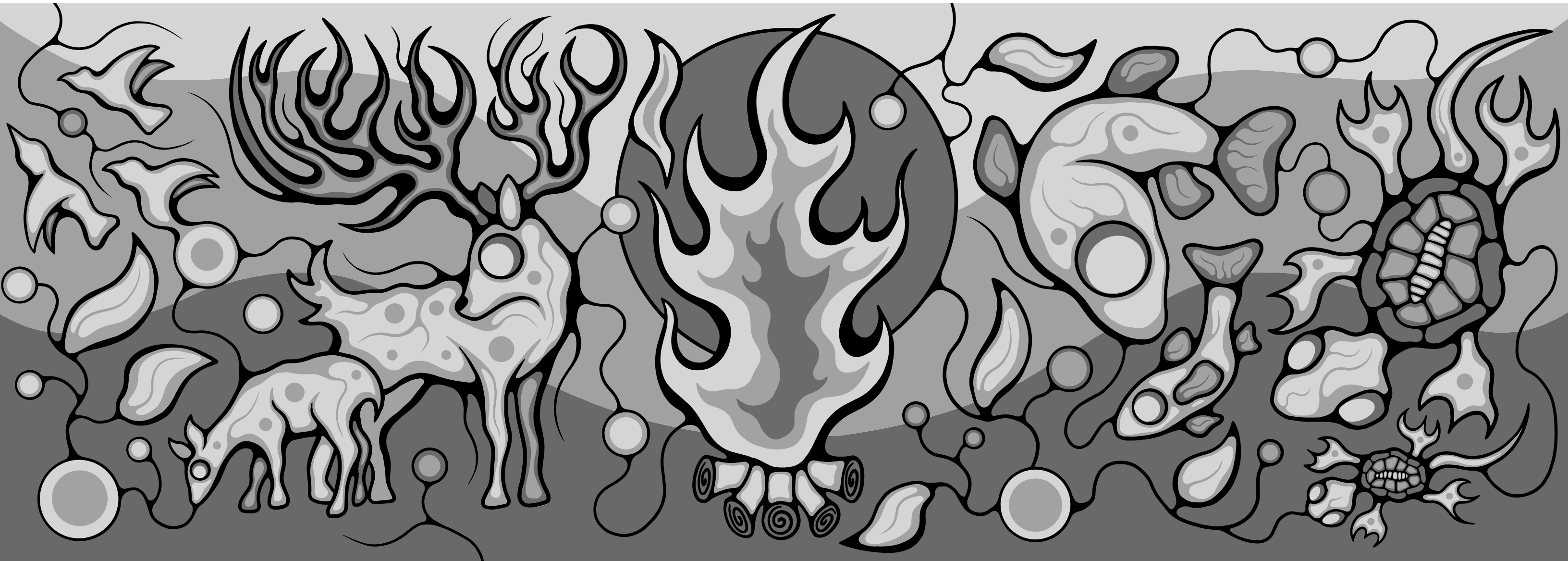


(Photo: Karl Van Horik), (Rendering: Mike Cywink)

### **“The Spirit Within”**

When creating this story, I was thinking of the spirit of the Wampum Learning Lodge and the warmth, love and learning that happens there. I think about the ones who are teaching, guiding, and leading the younger ones. Not just in an academic sense, but also through our original teachings and ways of being. I think about balance. One day you could be there grinding out an essay and the next you're doing some traditional beadwork. That type of balance in life is so important to lead a healthy life. I think about connection. As you can tell in the story, everything is connected. Our connections to each other. Connection to spirit. Connection to the water, to the animals and connection to Mother Earth. We are all connected and always will be.





(Rendering: Mike Cywink)

# ELDER SPOTLIGHT

In each issue of *Laotsyá:n*, we spotlight teachings from local Indigenous Elders and Knowledge keepers. This month we would like to highlight Knowledge Keeper Liz Akiwenzie.

## Liz Akiwenzie

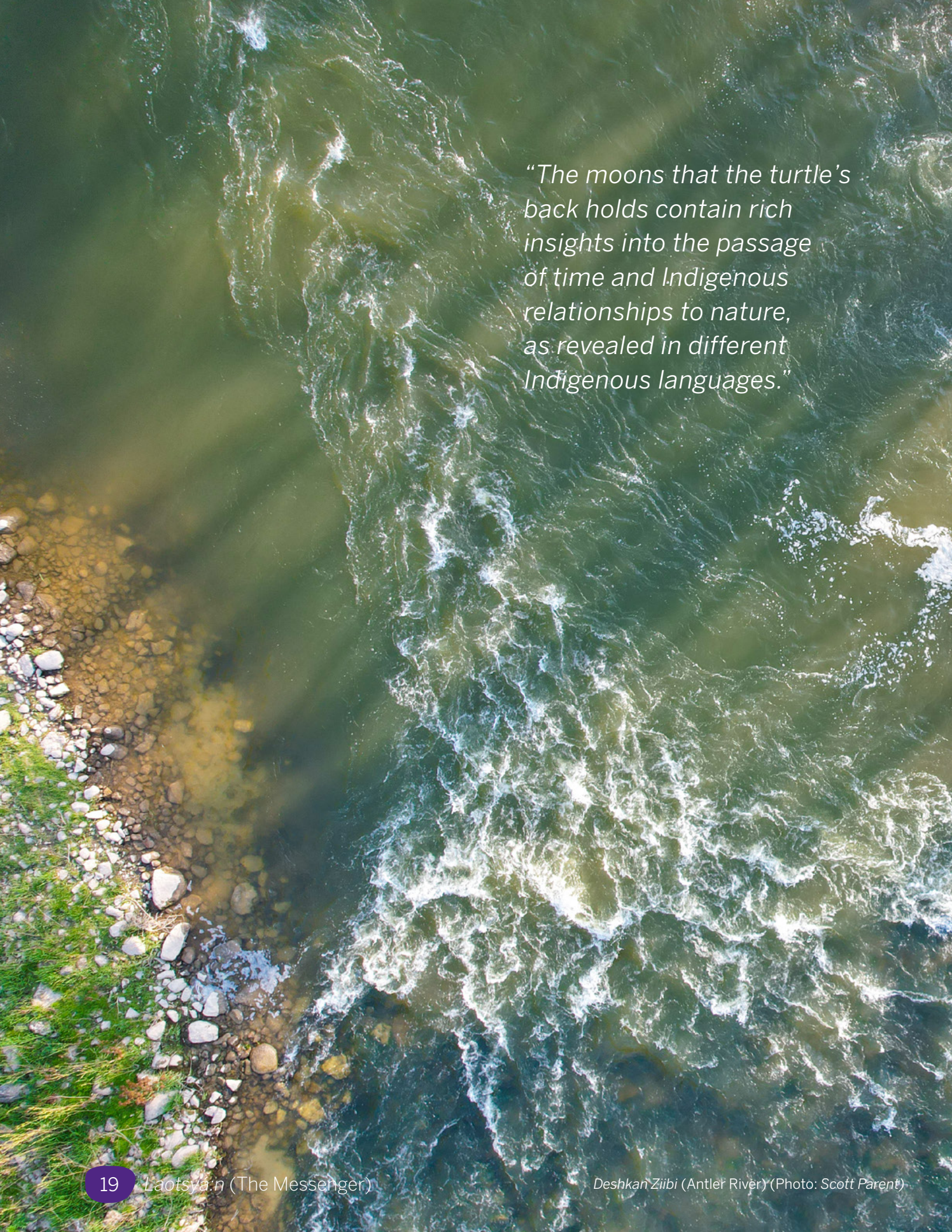
Elder Liz Akiwenzie is Anishinaabe-kwe on her father's side and Haudenosaunee Oneida on her mother's side—as well as mother of six children (three sons and three daughters) and *nokomis* (grandmother) to 10 grandchildren!

“My greatest teacher was my stepdad,” she says. “He taught me about medicines and took me to ceremonies. My mother was my best teacher about being a mother and grandmother. My best friend was my late sister Victoria, who travelled with me to ceremonies across Turtle Island since we were young women. We learned together and became ceremony people. I am a Sundance helper and grandmother of this ceremony.”

Liz is a Cultural Educator, and has worked for almost 40 years in fields that involve helping others: health, mental health, education, and justice. Equipped with a strong educational background in social work, and as a cultural helper for Elders and ceremonial helper to both Anishinabek and Onieda Knowledge Keepers, she has been serving Indigenous communities during her whole career. During that time, she has conducted countless teaching and healing circles, as well as providing one-on-one healing sessions. “I also raise awareness of the historical impact of oppression and genocide of our relatives,” she adds, “educating settlers to better understand our cultural way of knowing. I am a voice for the people who lost their voices through cultural abuse by religious institutions.”

This year, Liz is bringing her knowledge and gifts to Western, partnering with the Wampum Learning Lodge to organize a Ribbon Skirt Showcase later this year. “Our ribbon skirts are our homes, full of life, telling stories with every skirt,” she notes. “They signify remembrance, and beautify us with every stride.” Proceeds from the Showcase will go towards the construction of the Round House in Chippewa, a gathering space for ceremony.

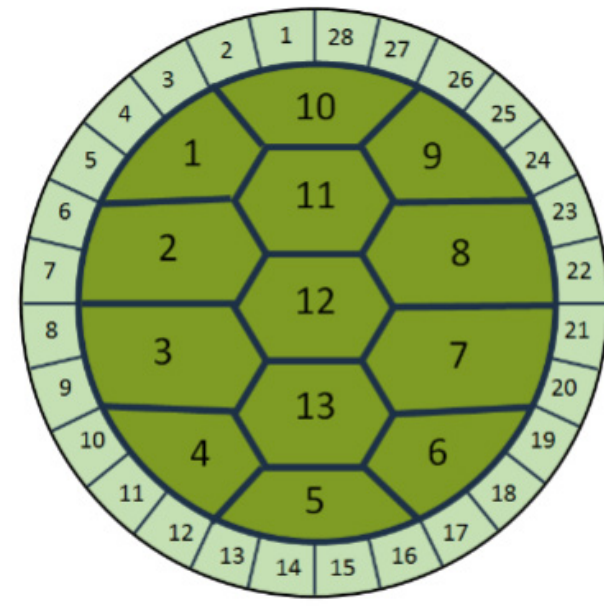




“The moons that the turtle’s back holds contain rich insights into the passage of time and Indigenous relationships to nature, as revealed in different Indigenous languages.”

## Teachings About the Phases of the Moon

In some Indigenous cultures, the turtle’s shell has traditionally been used to represent a calendar for tracking days and months. The outer rim is divided into 28 panels that count the days, while the inner shell is divided into the 13 cycles of the moon.



The turtle is an apt symbol for the passage of time, moving slowly and steadily through life and the seasons; and, as we all know, many Indigenous Peoples know to North America as Turtle Island, in response to teachings from Creation Stories.

The moons that the turtle’s back holds also contain rich insights into the passage of time and Indigenous relationships to nature, as revealed in different Indigenous languages. The names that correspond roughly to the months of the Western calendar are poetic and evocative, reminding us of how each season brings different gifts and requires different tasks. As the chart below shows, the three main Indigenous languages in the London area reveal a delightful variety of interpretations of the coming months, all connected with the natural world.

| Month  | Onyota’a: ka (Oneida)                     | Anishinabemowin (Ojibwe)                          | Lane Lenape (Delaware)                               |
|--------|---|---|--|
| April  | <i>Wahsakayu:tese’</i><br>Thundering Moon | <i>Popogami Giizis</i><br>Broken Snowshoe Moon    | <i>Chkwalii Kiishooxkw</i><br>Frog Moon              |
| May    | <i>Latiyáthos</i><br>Planting Moon        | <i>Nimebine Giizis</i><br>Sucker Moon             | <i>Ehahkiiheewii Kiishooxkw</i><br>Planting Moon     |
| June   | <i>Awáhihte’</i><br>Strawberry Moon       | <i>Waabigonii Giizis</i><br>Blooming Moon         | <i>Wteehiimii Kiishooxkw</i><br>Strawberry Moon      |
| July   | <i>Ohyótsheli’</i><br>Stringbean Moon     | <i>Miin Giizis</i><br>Berry Moon                  | <i>Lehlookihlaashii Kiishooxkw</i><br>Raspberry Moon |
| August | <i>Onástase’</i><br>New Corn Moon         | <i>Minoomini Giizis</i><br>Grain (Wild Rice) Moon | <i>Askxaskwiimii Kiishooxkw</i><br>Green Corn Moon   |



## ***Biindigen* Indigenous Learning Circle**

*Biindigen* is Western's Indigenous learning circle, and we always welcome new participants to join and contribute to the process of Indigenous teaching and learning on campus. The group meets two to four times a year at the Wampum Learning Lodge to discuss a pre-assigned theme or topic rooted in Indigenous stories and media.

For the month of June, *Biindingen* has launched the Indigenous History Month 30-Day Challenge. The Challenge's theme this year is Indigenous food sovereignty. Each day will feature a "challenge" task, as well as an accompanying resource and/or activity. Food security is an important issue for many people, and food inflation has been especially significant over the past year—in both urban and rural areas. By drawing attention to this issue with the challenge we hope to bring the community together to critically think about our connection to the land, and local foods, while celebrating the diverse and beautiful cultures of Indigenous Peoples of Turtle Island.



## ***Peetooteewiit***

Spring brought new Indigenous voices to campus, as *Peetooteewiit* continued with its regular programming. On April 26, Indigenous artist-in-residence Kelly Greene spoke on her solar longhouse project, and on May 30, *Peetooteewiit* welcomed Serena Mendizabal speaking on "Indigenous Health, Grassroots Activism, and Climate Justice." The series is on pause for the month of June as OII hosts the Building Reconciliation Forum, but it will be back again in the fall.

## Intangible Measures: The Impact of Cultural Workshops

At the end of February, the Wampum Learning Lodge hosted Sandra (Sam) D Moore and her husband Barry Moore to facilitate a Caribou Hair Tufting and a Porcupine Quilling workshop. In conjunction with the Visiting Aunties and Uncles Program at the Indigenous Student Centre, we developed these traditional art workshops as an opportunity for our communities—staff, students and Indigenous people from outside the University—to build relationships with each other in an informal and culturally enriching environment.



The feedback we received was highly positive. Sam, “an incredibly gifted teacher,” shared her stories, knowledge, and teachings, along with the practices of caribou hair tufting and porcupine quillwork—giving participants the confidence to continue practicing their skills after the workshops. Many participants spoke of cultural reconnection—one noted that their “relatives could not teach [them] any of [their] culture’s traditional crafts and techniques” while another stated that “as an urban native who isn’t near her home territory, opportunities like this to learn, reconnect, and share knowledge are so fulfilling”—and many participants referenced healing, describing the workshops as “medicine for the spirit, heart, and body.”

While there is no easy way to measure the impact of offering this type of programming, since many of the outcomes are intangible and highly personal, it is certainly clear that it is significant—as judged by the overwhelming demand that occurred during registration. Oll staff were provided with lots of programming ideas for the future to continue supporting our communities, and most exciting for Western as a whole was the embrace of the Wampum Learning Lodge by the community—as articulated by one respondent, who shared that with the opening of the Lodge, “Western will begin addressing a gap that’s existed for London’s native community.”



## Increasing Access to Land-Based Learning for Indigenous Students

Land-based learning has been a practice and aspect of education in Indigenous communities since time immemorial. It involves learning not just about the land, but also with the land—as a relation. Learning with the land grounds us, connecting us to place, ancestors, and all our relations, and can offer healing and comfort.

Indigenous students at Western are invited to maintain their relationship with the land or reconnect with it through culturally relevant, land-based learning opportunities. Thanks to the Parr Centre for Thriving, the Office of Indigenous Initiatives has financial support to launch a Land-Based Learning Fund. The Fund comprises two parts: a student fund and a fund for on-campus or local group experiences.

The student fund provides financial support for individual students to cover the costs of accessing external/ community land-based learning experiences. Awards range from \$200 to \$3,000, depending on the student’s self-identified needs. The on-campus fund supports student access to land-based learning programming on campus via the Wampum Learning Lodge.

The first on-campus land-based learning opportunity was a Maple Boil and took place on, April 20 hosted at the Lodge’s Ceremonial Arbour. This was a drop-in wellness event for Indigenous students and anyone interested in seeing how maple water is converted to maple syrup; the Boil was run all day with Elder Bruce Elijah on-site in the morning.

This is a newly launched program, and evaluations and feedback from participants will help guide the future development of land-based learning experiences, as well as the implementation of land-based learning in curriculum and programming at the Wampum Learning Lodge and Western.



Maple Boil (Photo: Ashley Kewayosh)



## Congratulations, Graduates!

March 31<sup>st</sup> was a special day for Indigenous students across campus, marked by the Indigenous Students Graduation Ceremony that we observe every year. For the first time ever, we held the ceremony in the new Wampus Learning Lodge, with three separate graduation ceremonies held for different student groups. The ceremonies began in the morning and ran for much of the day, honouring graduates in numerous fields from across Western's many faculties and professional schools. The day began with a sacred fire, and we also hosted a photo booth to help the students commemorate a great milestone in their lives. Of particular note was the performance by the drum group Eagle Flight Singers, who are well known to the Western Indigenous community and who helped make the day especially memorable. We wish all our new graduates the very best as they embark on the next stage in their lives!



## Garden Springs into Spring

With the change of season, the gardening program at the Wampus Learning Lodge has moved into full swing. The seedlings have been started, and the garden awakening ceremony is in the planning stages.

We love to connect with the community to discuss plants, seeds, or any other land-based projects you may be working on, and our engagement with community is ongoing. Justin Hay from the Oneida Nation, for example, provided us with kale seeds, in exchange for which we gifted him white corn seed. Oneida language consultant Kaliwahe Matt Ireland will be growing a variety of items in his garden this year, including beans and squash, and OII will be sending him some Tuscarora white corn to thank him for all he does with and for us.

The Lodge has also partnered with community members in Oneida on the White Corn Revitalization Project. The in-community phase of this project begins with planting a half-acre lot of Tuscarora white corn, whose harvest will be used for seed in the final phase in 2024. We have incorporated opportunities for learning from community members into the overall project, as sharing of knowledge forms an important part of the cultural reclamation that comes with the agricultural revitalization. To learn more about our garden programming as we develop it, drop by the Lodge to have a chat with our staff and see how things are coming along.



## Access Guidelines in Place for Wampum Learning Lodge

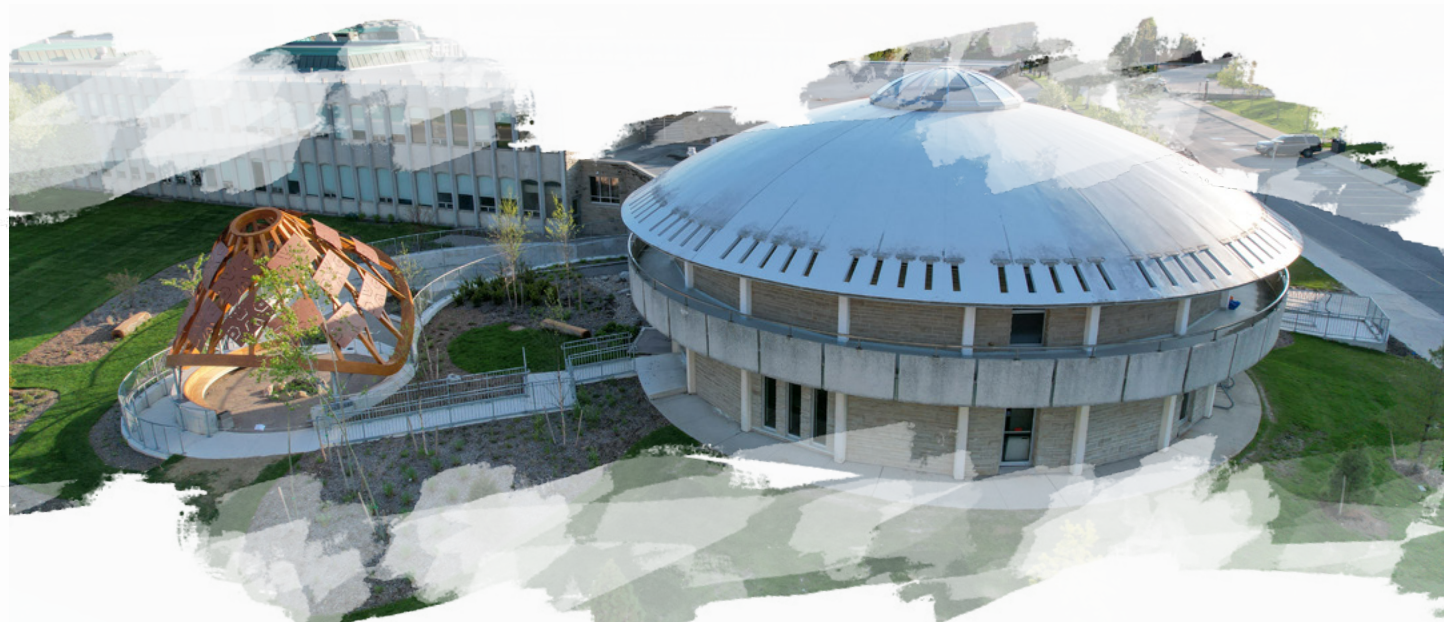
As a home for Indigenous teaching and learning at Western, the Wampum Learning Lodge is the University's central venue for expressing Indigenous ways of knowing and being on campus. The Lodge serves many roles: to prioritize and advance the work of Reconciliation; to act as a touchstone for Indigenous Peoples and communities to engage with Western; to connect members of the Western community committed to Indigenization and decolonization; and to advance Indigenous knowledges and pedagogies across disciplines.

To ensure the space fulfills these many roles, OII has worked together with the Provost to develop an Indigenous-led registration requirement for all users. This requirement has been developed over the past few months and comprises four elements:

- provision of name, position, and Western ID;
- completion of a virtual orientation of the building which includes the review of the terms of use for all areas terms of use of all areas;
- completion of "4 Seasons of Reconciliation," a multi-media cultural awareness course; and
- review and signing of a User Agreement that outlines respectful engagement principles to inform the work of decolonization and Indigenization.

The registration process will take place in two phases. Phase 1, which runs for the calendar year 2023, prioritizes Indigenous engagement through the provision of cultural programming designed to help Indigenous users experience safety within a dedicated space. Indigenous students, staff, and faculty will have swipe-card access to the Lodge upon registration and completion of the WLL User Agreement; allied students, staff, and faculty are invited to register and access the Lodge for regular and scheduled programs and events. Phase 2 will begin in January 2024 and will involve a review of the terms of access to determine how well they have served the work of Reconciliation to date.

For a more detailed description of the guidelines detailing access to the Lodge, please visit



Wampum Learning Lodge (Photo: Scott Parent)

the [Wampum Learning Lodge website](#).

## Track and Field Day Keeps Running

For the last 17 years, Western's Indigenous Student Centre and Western Mustangs Varsity Track and Field athletes have collaborated to organize a one-day event for Indigenous youth (grades 6-8) across Southwestern Ontario. The event promotes teamwork, a healthy lifestyle, and the importance of school spirit.

This opportunity is highly relevant to our youth and community members. Youth are given a first-hand experience of visiting our campus and meeting other Indigenous students their own age, current Western students, and Western faculty and staff. This event is a great contribution to helping our youth realize their full potential through a direct and culturally founded connection with the University. It also signifies that Western values Indigenous communities and continues to foster relationships with them.

Reaching out with an invitation to visit our campus for a day of healthy physical activity may seem like a small gesture, but it resonates with the youth and the community in a very positive manner. This year we welcomed back a great cohort of students—after the hiatus caused by Covid—and we hope that the event will have planted a seed that will ultimately grow into a bigger dream: coming to Western again in a few years, but this time as university students who are ready to realize their full potential.



## Engage Western: Connecting to the London Community

On April 11, Western hosted *Engage Western*, an open event for the London community designed to showcase the University, build good relationships and recruit future students. Western has developed a positive rapport with London over its history, and through *Engage Western* we continue to grow it.

The event was especially meaningful to us, as we had great Indigenous representation. We hosted our own booth, which comprised OII, the Indigenous Student Centre, and the Wampum Learning Lodge, and our presence sent a strong message to potential students and others that Western is a place where Indigenous people are welcome and their voices are valued.

Proceeds from the event are being donated to the newly created **Health and Homelessness Fund for Change**. The Fund is administered by the London Community Foundation, and brings together business and community leaders to fight homelessness in the London area. We are proud to have contributed to the success of this event, and will continue our outreach efforts, which will help strengthen the Indigenous presence at Western.



Christy R. Bressette, Paul Porter, Western Mustang, Dan and MaryLou Smoke, Paula Hedgepath  
(Photo: Maharus Noorani)

## Annual Indigenous Student Powwow a Great Success

The Indigenous Student Association (ISA) held its annual powwow in March, with the Wampum Learning Lodge and the Faculty of Education gymnasium serving as venues. *Celebrating our Next Generation* began with the Grand Entry at 11:00 a.m. Fancy, Traditional, Jingle, and Grass dances were featured, as well as round dance songs and a Smoke Dance exhibition, with the Host Drum provided by Crazy Spirit. Dancers' categories were Junior (0-12), Teen (13-17), Adult (18-64), and Senior-adult (65+). A vendor market was held simultaneously in the Lodge, and festivities culminated in a Thanksgiving Feast *Miigwech, Yaw^o, Anushik* to all community members who came to support Indigenous artists, caterers, entrepreneurs, and the ISA.



## Mini-U Has a New Home

Our Mini-University experience has been a longstanding means for us to reach out to Indigenous students in the surrounding area and give them a taste of what university life will be like—all with the aim of encouraging them on their path to higher education and potentially recruiting them to Western for their studies. Last year participants were all restricted to engaging through Zoom, but we're delighted to announce that this year Mini-U will be in person. We will be welcoming two cohorts of kids—Otter and Crane—in the 11-13 and 14-17 age groups; and what better place to introduce them to being Indigenous at Western than the Wampum Learning Lodge.

As we did in previous years, we will be providing participants with a summer camp of activities that will promote Indigenous cultural reconnection and revitalization. Our program will include land-based learning, such as gardening, cultivation of seedlings, and the discovery of the world of plants and their knowledge; sporting activities, such as Haudenosaunee lacrosse; Indigenous stories and ways of storytelling; and team-building exercises that will help them make friendships that will last well beyond their time at the Lodge.



WESTERN'S OFFICE OF  
INDIGENOUS INITIATIVES  
PRESENTS

Mini-University  
Summer 2023



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## 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.



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