



St. Thomas  
UNIVERSITY

---

**Senate Committee on  
Reconciliation Strategic Plan**

March 2022

# SENATE COMMITTEE ON RECONCILIATION

## Strategic Plan

*Updated: March 14, 2022*

The Senate Committee on Reconciliation operates in accordance with its Core Values of **inclusivity, understanding, respect, and openness**.

The Senate Committee on Reconciliation exists to:

- Create a welcoming, safe, and inclusive community where Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, faculty, and staff have a sense of belonging;
- Foster understanding and awareness through education, cultural events, and research;
- Promote respect for Indigenous nationhood, practices, spirituality, ceremonies, treaty protocols, and art;
- Encourage openness and intercultural awareness; and
- Work toward decolonization and further active efforts toward reconciliation, which some are calling “*reconciliACTION*” (defined as: *a meaningful action that moves reconciliation forward*) <https://www.engageforchange.ca/blog/reconciliaction>

### **KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- The Committee works to ensure that the University annually identifies and fulfills its responsibilities in accordance with the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015) that universities take the lead in re-setting the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities as part of their national responsibility. <https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Calls to Action English2.pdf>
- On identifying goals and tasks to be undertaken in each academic year, the Committee determines practical steps and specific timelines for advancing reconciliation through initiatives that address safety, education, dialogue, and collective action.
- The Committee is responsible for drawing the University’s attention to ways to build on and expand existing relationships between the University and Indigenous communities in the region, and advance efforts toward decolonization.

In carrying out its responsibilities, the following themes guide the work of the Senate Committee on Reconciliation:

- Access to post-secondary education, retention, and completion for Indigenous STU students by identifying and addressing barriers;
- Support for Indigenous students at STU; and
- Relationship building, knowledge sharing, and collaboration with Indigenous peoples, in particular the Wolastoqiyik, Wəlastəkewiyik / Maliseet, the Mi’Kmaq / Mi’kmaq, and Passamaquoddy / Peskotomuhkati tribes / nations.

To accomplish its goals, the Senate Committee embraces the following strategies:

- Talking Circles for conducting meetings;
- Participating in and/or hosting retreats and other events for Senate committee members and/or other members of the STU community to build relationships and engage with Indigenous culture and teachings;
- Actively engaging with and gathering input from Indigenous students and members of Indigenous communities, knowledge keepers; and
- Building linkages between Indigenous and non-Indigenous members of the University community.

Goals of the Senate Committee on Reconciliation include:

- Fostering and celebrating Indigenous participation
  - Expanding opportunities for Indigenous communities to partner with the Senate Committee on Reconciliation and the University;
  - Enhancing work-integrated learning, internships, and experiential learning opportunities for Indigenous students;
  - Working to eliminate barriers to participation in the University community for Indigenous people;
  - Providing support for Indigenous students' engagement;
  - Increasing connections among Indigenous students on and off campus;
  - Encouraging pride and a sense of identity for Indigenous students, staff, and faculty (e.g., through implementation of a smudging policy, etc.);
  - Encouraging safety on campus for Indigenous students, staff, and faculty through allyship, education, workshops, and the use of anti-racism infographics;
  - Providing more physical space on campus for Indigenous students (e.g., by expanding the Wabanaki Centre, creating an outdoor Indigenous gathering space on campus, etc.); and
  - Recognizing Indigenous students' accomplishments on and off campus.
- Engaging students, faculty, and staff in Indigenous learning
  - Encouraging and supporting Indigenous student initiatives and research, including those toward reconciliation;
  - Promoting enhanced cross-cultural understanding and relationship building (e.g., through talking circles, cultural awareness-training, gatherings, celebrations, etc.);
  - Organizing events that showcase Indigenous histories, cultures, and experiences; and
  - Maintaining a website of resources that showcase university events and provide materials for courses and research projects on reconciliation.
- Integrating Indigenous knowledge in teaching
  - Encouraging greater engagement of Indigenous communities in enhancing awareness of Indigenous issues (e.g., through land-based courses, co-taught courses; internship experiences and work-integrated learning within Indigenous communities for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, student

research, *Calls to Justice*, etc.); [https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Calls for Justice.pdf](https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Calls_for_Justice.pdf)

- Indigenizing curriculum through working with faculty, and providing resources to enhance Indigenous content and perspectives; and
  - Promoting the creation of new courses on Indigenous histories, governance, cultures, spiritualities, languages, etc. through enhanced connections with faculty.
- Promote learning and teaching development for faculty and staff to implement Indigenous Experiential Learning across disciplines and services:
    - Promoting Indigenous research;
    - Create events that ‘teach the teachers’ or ‘train the trainer’ on how to integrate Indigenous teachings into curriculum (e.g., the ‘Two-Eyed’ Seeing approach);
    - Work with Indigenous peoples to document, preserve, and revitalize their cultural traditions and languages;
    - Develop an Indigenous culture awareness training program with the goal of delivering sessions for faculty, staff, and students;
    - Organize class visits and guest lectures from the STU community and other members and leaders of Indigenous communities in Canada;
    - Encourage the STU Journalism department to incorporate Indigenous history to fulfill Call to Action #86: *We call upon Canadian journalism programs and media schools to require education for all students on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal– Crown relations;*
    - Consult with the Maliseet Immersion Program instructors to share knowledge on the experiential learning curriculum they have on their courses to provide examples of successful Indigenous education to be modeled after other academic subject areas.

## **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

This strategic plan is intended to guide the St. Thomas University community in promoting inclusivity and respect, to encourage further understanding and active efforts of reconciliation and decolonization, on the traditional territory of the Wolastoqiyik, Mi’kmaq/Mi’kmaw/Mi’gmaq and Passamaquoddy/Peskotomuhkati Tribes/Nations who are members of the Wabanaki Confederacy. The strategic plan will be reviewed annually at the end of the academic year