



2025 Annual Report



OFFICE OF
INDIGENOUS INITIATIVES

**OFFICE OF INDIGENOUS INITIATIVES
ANNUAL REPORT
2025**

Statement from the Associate Vice-Principal, Indigenous Initiatives

Shé:kon sewaké:kon (Greetings to you all),

I joined the Office of Indigenous Initiatives team in February 2025. Being new to Queen's University as a staff member was a new experience. I am honoured to be part of the amazing Office of Indigenous Team and the Queen's community. My time here at Queen's started with building relationships. Relationships are so important and without putting the work in to create, renew and maintain relationships the work required to increase Indigenous initiatives across campus will not progress.

My first day, I walk into my office and the first thing I see is a framed quote that has resonated with me on that day and continues to guide me.

*"To heal is to know where we came from, where we are at and
where we want to go."*

- Te ho wis kwûnt

2025 was just the beginning of many great initiatives to come as the Office of Indigenous Initiatives begins to focus on expanding and working with partners to provide guidance and assist in making initiatives a reality. The Office of Indigenous Initiatives is looking forward to meeting more students, staff and faculty in 2026 and collaborating to build a stronger community across campus.

2025 also marked the ten-year anniversary of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) Final Report. This anniversary, a reminder of how far we have come and still how much work remains to be accomplished to achieve truth and reconciliation.

I would also like to acknowledge my predecessor, Kanonhsyonne, Janice Hill, for the tremendous amount of work she undertook to advance Indigenous Initiatives across campus. The hard work you undertook to clear the path that you have laid down, and the substantial work accomplished has made some of my path forward much easier. I am forever grateful to know you, for the knowledge you share, the work you completed and for all that you have accomplished. Nyawen'kó:wa (big thanks)!

Welcome to the first Annual Report of the Office of Indigenous Initiatives. While the OII has released many reports on specific topics in the past, we are starting with a small summary of the year and will build on the report and type of information provided as the years progress. The report celebrates some of our accomplishments but does not capture

everything. 2025 was a year of relationships – creating new relationships, renewing previous relationships and strengthening those relationships already in place.

As we progress through 2026, we will continue to build on the great work that has started. I encourage you to continue your own relationship building, working collaboratively and creating initiatives that continue to improve and break down barriers for Indigenous inclusion across campus.

Skén:nen kénhak (Go along in Peace),

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lisa Maracle". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "L" and "M".

Lisa Maracle
Associate Vice-Principal
Office of Indigenous Initiatives

INTRODUCTION

The Office of Indigenous Initiatives was established in 2017 and was the first recommendation of the Queen's 2017 Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Task Force Final Report.

The Office of Indigenous Initiatives builds community, advances reconciliation/conciliation and integrates Indigenous ways of knowing and being into the fabric and life of the university.

This report will highlight some of the work that is being done from the Office of Indigenous Initiatives. In future reports we will also be including information from across the Queen's community. I encourage you to read the [Vice-Principal Culture, Equity, Inclusion annual report](#) for an overview of what departments and faculties are undertaking to further Indigenous Initiatives across campus.

The [2022-2023 Yakwanastahente'ha Aankenjigemi: Extending The Rafters, Truth and Reconciliation Commission Task Force Report](#) announced that it would be the final year of the report and that we would "begin reporting on more specific initiatives and focus more on the prioritization of Indigenization."

STAFFING

The Office of Indigenous Initiatives worked to fill vacant positions during 2025 and currently has six of the seven positions filled. While we still need to fill the Communications and Projects Coordinator position, we are hopeful to have this position filled in the coming months.

Lisa Maracle, Associate Vice-Principal, Indigenous Initiatives, joined the team in February 2025. Lisa is a member of the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte and lives on the Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory.

Roberta Bighetty, Indigenous Engagement Lead joined the team in July 2025. Roberta is Swampy Cree and a member of Mathias Colomb Cree Nation.

2025 INITIATIVES

Education

Ongoing - Bi-weekly Elder Talk sessions are hosted in Kanonhweratónhtshera (Mohawk) | G'di-mikwanim (Anishinaabemowin) | The Welcoming Room (E202, MacCorry Hall) as well as on Zoom. The Elder Talk sessions cover a variety of topics and explore indigenous worldviews. Over the year, topics have included Indigenous Experiences in Colonial Institutions, Roles and Values of Indigenous Women in Community, Indigenous Culture, Teachings and Mindset, Honouring the Land – Connection, Respect and Preservation and Peace and a Good Mind. Our Cultural Advisor also hosted a talk on Decolonization and Indigenization with invited guest Chancellor Shelagh Rogers.

September 2025 – The selected topic for the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation was Respectful Engagement this year. To support and encourage this focus across campus, the Office of Indigenous Initiatives created a '[Guidelines for Respectful Engagement in reconciliation work](#)' that launched in early September ahead of NDTR, intended to support the work year-round.

Relationship Building and Community

Ongoing - The Office of Indigenous Initiatives coordinates the Indigenous Staff and Faculty Network employee resource group at Queen's. Networking lunches are held on a regular basis to bring Indigenous staff and faculty together to engage in discussion and sit with community.

Ongoing/Monthly - OII's Cultural Advisor hosted monthly Community Fires for Peace for students, staff and faculty. The Community Fires are a place to come together to support and encourage wellbeing for students, staff and faculty. We are reminded that we need to have peace and a good mind in the work we all undertake at the University. The fires are a place to engage in discussion, to listen and reflect, or to sit with likeminded people. Relationship building happens when we are together.

August - The summer wrapped up with Welcome Day for Indigenous Students. The Office of Indigenous Initiatives were invited to lunch with incoming Indigenous students and their families. It is always encouraging and a great reminder that the work we do ultimately will benefit new generations of students each year as they join Queen's as they pursue their future.

September - OII AVP Lisa Maracle represents Queen's and the OII on the Matariki Network. Lisa attended the Matariki Network Annual Meeting in Durham, UK.

Ongoing - The AVP is also a member of the Reference Group on Indigenous Education (RGIE) with the Council of Ontario Universities (COU) as well as a member of the National Indigenous University Senior Leaders Association (NIUSLA). Attendance at regular meetings of these groups assist in networking with Indigenous colleagues in other institutions, providing the ability to discuss and be up to date regarding common experiences and issues faced.

Ongoing - OII Cultural Advisor, Te ho wis kwûnt, continues to support and welcome International students each year with an initial welcome and ongoing events with the Queen's University International Centre (QUIC).

Collaboration and Consultation

2025 began with discussions of the [Queen's Bicentennial Vision](#). When OII AVP Lisa Maracle joined Queen's, consultation on the draft visioning document was already underway. Many discussions across campus, with the Indigenous Staff and Faculty Network along with a presentation and discussion with the Indigenous Council of Queen's University helped Principal Deane in drafting the vision.

Ongoing - Throughout the academic year, the Indigenous Pathways Coordinator has worked collaboratively with the Limestone District School Board (LDSB) and provide workshops and Walk Talks to LDSB students. The opportunity to work with and interact with community outside of the Queen's campus fills our hearts.

Ongoing/September - In collaboration with VPCEI, the OII continues to support the organization of events for the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. In addition to the main ceremonial fire for all students, staff and faculty, OII also hosted a ceremonial fire in the Outdoor Gathering Space for all Indigenous students, staff and faculty who needed or wished to stop by for support of the Cultural Advisor or to just sit and reflect privately with community.

Ongoing - In Collaboration with the Queen's University Biological Station and Elbow Lake Environmental Education Centre, OII continues to support the development of an Indigenous Education Centre at Elbow Lake. Construction is ongoing, to be completed in Summer 2026.

Fall term - OII Cultural Advisor and Indigenous Engagement Lead supported Kingston Health Sciences Centre in the review and development of Indigenous Cultural Safety Courses.

Cultural Services

Indigenous Cultural Services

An original recommendation of the Queen's Truth and Reconciliation Task Force was to increase the accessibility of Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers and Teachers.

The Office of Indigenous Initiatives currently has 1 Cultural Advisor to assist with and support any requests or questions related to Indigenous cultural services, and support events, lectures or ceremonies across campus.

Examples of Cultural Services:

- welcome to Territory
- attend and-or present at an event or lecture
- ceremonial asks such as Smudging or Circles
- syllabi or course content support
- presentations and workshop facilitation
- research assistance or supervision
- one-on-one meetings

In 2025, we received Cultural Services Requests for the following*:

Request Type	Number of Requests/Participants
Opening and Welcome to Territory (with Smudge)	3
Opening and Welcome to Territory (without Smudge)	4
Ceremony or Circle	1
Workshop Participation or Facilitation	4
Meeting Request or Consultation	1
Elder Advice and Guidance	8
Walk Talk	54 sessions / 1,027 participants
Other	1

*These numbers reflect requests submitted through the Cultural Services request form. Additional requests were supported directly with the OII team.

LOOKING FORWARD:

The brief report above highlights the large projects and key initiatives the Office of Indigenous Initiatives undertook in 2025. It is important to note that this is not a comprehensive list and there is incredible work being done in the background each day by the OII team.

This work is not without its challenges. There are a great many people and projects across Queen's that are doing things in a good way – having the conversations, inviting Indigenous students, staff and faculty to the discussions and including us throughout the project, actively listening and holding meaningful dialogue. However, there are also projects that we have not been included in that should have had us at the table. We need to continue to critically examine and reflect on the way we are doing business with each other and look to see who is missing from the conversation and bring them in.



OFFICE OF
INDIGENOUS INITIATIVES