



Indigenous Strategic Plan

Brock University • 2026-2031

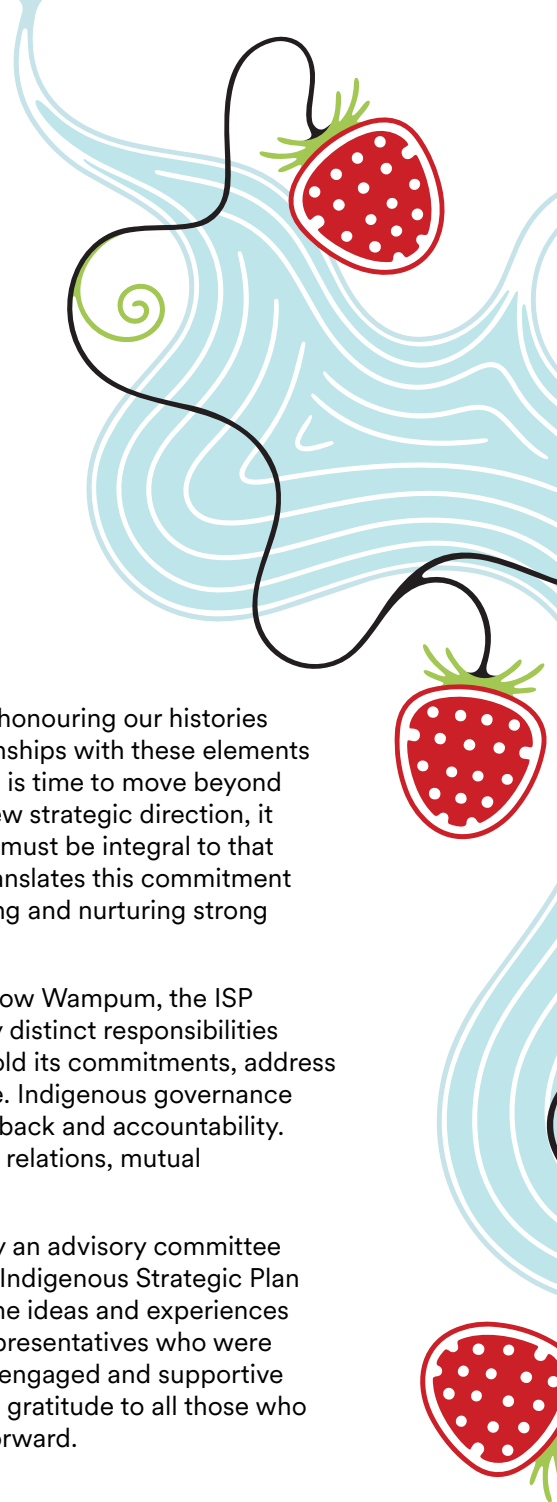
Gratitude

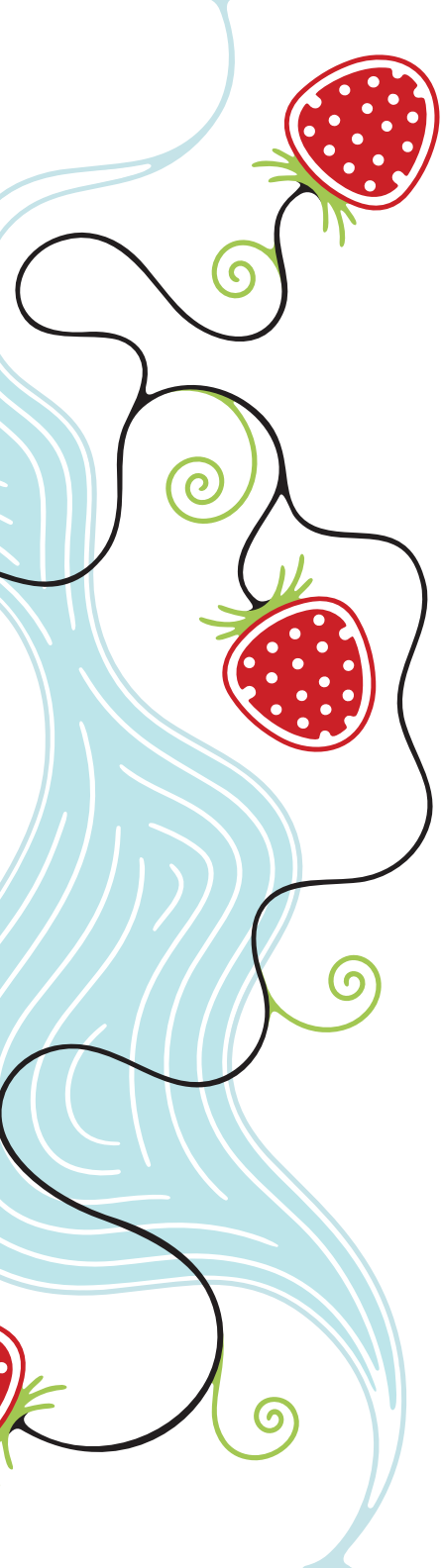
We acknowledge the land on which Brock University was built is the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe people, many of whom continue to live and work here today. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties and is within the land protected by the Dish with One Spoon Wampum agreement. Today, this gathering place is home to many First Nations, Métis and Inuit, and acknowledging reminds us that our great standard of living is directly related to the resources and friendship of Indigenous people.

Offering gratitude and acknowledging the land is not only about honouring our histories and ancestors, but also about envisioning what our future relationships with these elements should be. From the voices of Indigenous learners and Peoples: It is time to move beyond land acknowledgement statements. As Brock University sets a new strategic direction, it recognizes that reconciliation, Indigenization and decolonization must be integral to that direction. The Brock University Indigenous Strategic Plan (ISP) translates this commitment into a clear vision for advancing Indigenous education and building and nurturing strong relationships into the future.

Drawing on the teachings of the Dish with One Spoon and Two Row Wampum, the ISP recognizes that the University and Indigenous Peoples each carry distinct responsibilities within the relationship. The University has a responsibility to uphold its commitments, address institutional barriers and create meaningful conditions for change. Indigenous governance bodies, Nations and partners provide guidance, knowledge, feedback and accountability. Together, these distinct but parallel responsibilities support good relations, mutual accountability and ongoing progress.

The creation of the ISP was an Indigenous-led initiative guided by an advisory committee of dedicated faculty, staff and learner representatives. Under the Indigenous Strategic Plan Advisory Committee's leadership, the plan has been shaped by the ideas and experiences of the many Indigenous learners, staff, faculty and community representatives who were consulted. Additionally, Brock's senior leadership team has been engaged and supportive of this process throughout. The advisory committee expresses its gratitude to all those who participated and shared their perspectives in creating this path forward.





Vision

Rooted in the relationships that have shaped Ohnya:kara', Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners work together to build a University where Indigenous learners, faculty and staff thrive, Indigenous knowledges and worldviews are centred, and relationships with Indigenous communities are strengthened through shared responsibility and care.

Guiding principles

The ISP is grounded in values that emerged from consultations and dialogues with Indigenous learners, faculty, staff and communities. These values will guide University leaders, faculty, learners, staff and community partners as they work towards realizing the vision, calling on them to:

- Uphold the right to **self-determination**, protecting the inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples to determine their own priorities, pathways and futures.
- Ensure learning and institutional practices are **relevant** to Indigenous worldviews, practices and community needs.
- Demonstrate **reciprocity** by nurturing relationships grounded in mutual learning, respect and generosity.
- Exercise **responsibility** by ensuring Indigenous learners, communities and partners can meaningfully participate in decision-making and actions.
- Strengthen long-term **relationships** and accountability to each other, to land, to water and to our ancestors.
- Demonstrate **respect** for Indigenous cultural values and cultural integrity through our words and actions.
- Cultivate an atmosphere of **belonging** and well-being on campus for Indigenous learners, staff and faculty.

Strategic priorities and actions

Through a series of consultations, Indigenous learners, faculty, staff and community representatives were invited to share their experiences regarding barriers and opportunities across a variety of areas, including Indigenous learner success, the representation of Indigenous cultures and worldviews, community engagement, curriculum, evaluation and accountability. This feedback, including recommendations and aspirations, has resulted in the identification of six strategic priorities.



Centring Indigenous knowledges in teaching, learning, research, collaborations and spaces

Expand opportunities for Indigenous knowledges, languages and protocols to be meaningfully woven throughout teaching, curriculum, research, partnerships and institutional spaces. Consultations identified the need to honour the distinct identities, rights and knowledge systems of Indigenous Peoples across Turtle Island; avoid pan-Indigenous approaches; and give particular attention to the traditional peoples of the lands on which Brock University is situated — the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe.

Connects to the Brock University Institutional Strategic Plan:

Shape tomorrow through research, discovery and knowledge;
Build sustainable futures

ACTIONS

- Expand Indigenous curriculum, programs, research and learning pathways.
- Ensure Indigenous knowledges and approaches are reflected in how we teach, learn, research, collaborate, make decisions and measure success.
- Commit resources to support all faculty with Indigenous content and pedagogical approaches to ensure authenticity, accuracy and respect for Indigenous protocols.
- Work together to create a more environmentally sustainable campus.
- Elevate Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee voices, languages, artwork and cultural presence throughout the campus environment.
- Create dedicated Indigenous spaces on campus that support Indigenous teaching, research, celebration, feasting, artistic performance and ceremony.



Cultivating Indigenous learner success

Create the conditions for Indigenous learners to feel welcomed, supported, recognized and able to thrive throughout their University journey. Indigenous learner success must be defined by Indigenous learners themselves and reflect their diverse goals, responsibilities, identities and lived realities. Consultations emphasized the need for supports that are visible, accessible, Indigenous-specific and grounded in the realities of Indigenous learners' lives.

Connects to the Brock University Institutional Strategic Plan: Realize you matter

ACTIONS

- Strengthen Indigenous learner recruitment, transition, access and post-graduation pathways.
- Improve cultural safety on campus for Indigenous learners.
- Support students who require additional time to complete their studies and develop guidance for faculty and staff on accommodating bereavement, cultural and ceremonial leave, family and caregiving responsibilities, and community obligations.
- Expand well-being, academic, financial and community-connected supports for Indigenous learners.
- Nurture and celebrate Indigenous learner successes, leadership and belonging.



Supporting the community of Indigenous faculty and staff

Strengthen the conditions for Indigenous faculty and staff to feel culturally safe, meaningfully connected to peers, recognized for their labour, protected from backlash and institutionally supported in their respective roles. Consultations called for stronger accountability, clearer supports, and sustained action to ensure Indigenous faculty and staff are not isolated, overburdened or left to address racism, misinformation and harmful situations on their own.

Connects to the Brock University Institutional Strategic Plan: Shape tomorrow through research, discovery and knowledge; Realize you matter

ACTIONS

- Increase hiring, retention, advancement, leadership opportunities and formal recognition of Indigenous faculty and staff.
- Support Indigenous research methodologies and validate the time required for relational research, community accountability, protocol and relationship maintenance.
- Create clear, accountable processes for addressing and resolving classroom or workplace situations involving racism, identity-related harms and denialism in a good way.
- Strengthen Indigenous faculty and staff connection, cultural well-being, ceremony, land-based practice and orientation as essential core supports for belonging, retention and community.
- Recognize and address the disproportionate service, mentoring, advising and representational labour often carried out by Indigenous faculty and staff.



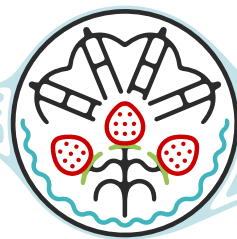
Nurturing reciprocal community relationships

Build sustained, respectful and mutually beneficial relationships with First Nations, urban Indigenous community organizations and Indigenous partners. This requires the University to be present and engaged in community, communicate consistently, share resources, honour community priorities and avoid extractive relationships.

Connects to the Brock University Institutional Strategic Plan: Shape tomorrow through research, discovery and knowledge; Bring the world to Brock, and Brock to the world

ACTIONS

- Establish and maintain meaningful, two-way communication and co-ordination between the University, First Nations, urban Indigenous communities and Indigenous partners.
- Improve Indigenous community access to University learning opportunities, spaces, events and resources.
- Build ethical, reciprocal partnerships and research relationships that are accountable to community priorities and self-determined goals.



Leading with Indigenous voices

Embed Indigenous leadership, authority and accountability within University structures, policies and everyday decision-making. Indigenous governance must go beyond consultation or symbolic representation and requires meaningful authority, early involvement in decision-making and clear mechanisms for follow-through. Indigenous learners, faculty, staff, councils, Nations, communities and organizations should have defined roles in shaping the policies, programs, research practices, hiring processes and supports that affect them. This oversight is necessary to ensure that Indigenous knowledges are represented respectfully, locally and accountably.

Connects to the Brock University Institutional Strategic Plan: Build sustainable futures

ACTIONS

- Strengthen and sustain Indigenous-led governance structures with meaningful authority, clear roles and mechanisms for follow-through.
- Increase Indigenous leadership and ensure leadership roles have visibility, voice and representation across the University.
- Ensure Indigenous voices, governance and decision-making authority guide the development and implementation of policies, ethical standards and accountability mechanisms.
- Develop an Indigenous identity substantiation policy and processes.
- Increase opportunities for Indigenous learners to connect with Indigenous leadership.
- Uphold Indigenous research governance to ensure that research involving Indigenous Peoples, knowledges, lands, communities, Nations and learners is ethical, reciprocal and accountable to community-defined goals and outcomes.





Advancing accountability and action

Create the conditions necessary for the success of the ISP. This requires University leaders, administrative units, staff and faculty to take ownership of the reconciliation, decolonization and Indigenization efforts within their area of responsibility. It also requires aligning policies, practices, systems and resources with principles and priorities of the ISP, while building the knowledge, skills and capacity of all employees and learners to support meaningful action.

Taking responsibility also means publicly reporting on progress, acknowledging challenges and ensuring adequate resources, staffing and supports are dedicated to advancing the ISP. As part of this work, the University will engage in truth-telling and institutional reflection regarding its history, its presence on Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee lands and its responsibilities arising from the treaty relationships of this territory. This includes critically examining institutional structures, spaces, naming practices and narratives to identify where colonial assumptions or histories may create barriers to belonging. This process will be Indigenous-led, transparent and grounded in respectful dialogue, with a willingness to make meaningful changes where needed.

Connects to the Brock University Institutional Strategic Plan: Build sustainable futures; Shape tomorrow through research, discovery and knowledge

ACTIONS

- Make commitments to the ISP visible and allocate resources, staffing and supports for its implementation.
- Co-develop indicators of success and publicly report on progress, challenges and areas requiring further action.
- Build University-wide learning and training that fosters Indigenous cultural safety, tackles anti-Indigenous racism and initiates behavioural accountability.
- Transform institutional policies, procedures and administrative practices to remove colonial practices and barriers, support Indigenous rights and ceremony, promote cultural safety and reduce harm.
- Strengthen public accountability, historical responsibility, senior leadership follow-through and shared decision-making for advancing the ISP.

Terminology

“Indigenous” is used throughout this strategic plan and is intended to be inclusive of First Nations, Métis and Inuit on Turtle Island. Where appropriate, the plan will be specific about the Nations, peoples or communities involved (i.e., Haudenosaunee, Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation or urban Indigenous organizations).

Ohnyá:kara' (pronounced Oh nya gaw rlaw) is the Kanien'kéha (Mohawk) word for “neck between two bodies of water” and is the origin of the name Niagara.

Artist statement

In the icons and illustrations created for the ISP, strawberry plants visually represent the goals and outcomes of the plan's guiding principles and strategic priorities and actions. Within the icons, these plants are depicted sprouted from people standing together, centred in relationships and nurtured through communal reciprocity. Because Brock University occupies traditional Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe territory, the strawberry plant serves as a visual element that resonates with both.

Interwoven alongside strawberry plants is the flow of water, honouring Onya:kara'. Not only does the water in the design connect the artwork to the land, but the presence of water also serves as a reminder that without it, there is no connection, nourishment or community. In the icons, water connects and nurtures people, representing the foundational relationships and responsibilities necessary to sustain a community.

Tsista Kennedy / Hotdog Water Art
Anishinaabe and Onyota'a:ka

