

THE FACULTY OF **NATIVE STUDIES** STRATEGIC PLAN 2018–2023



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
FACULTY OF NATIVE STUDIES

THE FACULTY OF NATIVE STUDIES IS:

STUDENT CENTRED, RESEARCH FOCUSED, COMMUNITY ENGAGED

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Message from the Dean

In 2018, the Faculty of Native Studies at the University of Alberta celebrated its 30th anniversary. Over the last three decades, the Faculty has dedicated itself to educating both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students on the complexity of Indigenous-Canada relations and the validity and value of Indigenous knowledges.

The Faculty has grown remarkably over the last three years, due in large part to the University of Alberta's focus on foundational capacity-building as part of its response to the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Building on this growth, our five-year strategic plan reflects the Faculty of Native Studies' ongoing focus on community engagement. In this context, this document lays out FNS's plan to expand our complement of faculty members, staff and students at the graduate and undergraduate levels; to enhance the diversity of learning experiences for our students; to extend the global presence of our graduate students and faculty members by securing external research funding and renewing relationships with Indigenous studies colleagues globally; to continue engagement with local Indigenous communities and organizations in the defence of Indigenous sovereignty and in the building of Indigenous capacity; and to continue to build relationships with donors to help sustain these strategic priorities in ethical ways.

The Faculty of Native Studies is one of the world's leading Indigenous studies units, and our emphasis over the next five years will be on enhancing our institutional presence both within the University of Alberta and across academia more broadly. While our strategic plan reflects this priority, our primary focus is leveraging our growth and increased capacity to offer a broader range of learning experiences to our students, faculty and staff, and engaging with Indigenous communities in reciprocal, sustainable ways.

Chris Andersen, Ph.D.

Dean, Faculty of Native Studies



Who We Are

Our Vision

To produce a better society by educating Indigenous and non-Indigenous students to be responsible citizens through excellent community engagement, teaching and research focused on the complexity of Indigenous issues and thought.

Our Mission

To produce graduates across the university who have respect for Indigenous knowledges, who are educated about Indigenous histories and contemporary issues, and who can work collaboratively with Indigenous communities and peoples.

Our Values

The Faculty of Native Studies values:

- autonomy as a Faculty within the academy
- interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches
- the relevance of Native perspectives and Indigenous knowledge
- the contribution of Elders to teaching, research and sense of direction
- our interactions with and connections to Native communities
- the promotion of Indigenous languages
- the scholarly standards of the academy for the creation and dissemination of knowledge

Areas of Strength

- **Critical Indigenous Theory** – Building strong disciplinary frameworks that reflect Indigenous experiences, enliven Indigenous ways of knowing, and envision revitalized Indigenous futures.
- **Indigenous Sexualities and Feminisms** – Engaging the diverse experiences of Indigenous sexualities and gender using multiple Indigenous feminist perspectives.
- **Indigenous Peoples and Place** – Prioritizing the role of land, territory, kinship, and belonging in Indigenous life, with a particular focus on the experiences of prairie and northern Indigenous peoples.
- **Indigenous Governance** – Studying the political relations within Indigenous communities and relationships with non-Indigenous governments, oriented by Indigenous political philosophies.



Introduction to the Plan

The Faculty of Native Studies is:

Student centred...

Ours is a mission that goes beyond the classroom. Our faculty, staff, and students are motivated to produce lasting change in the world, and to empower students as the next generation of leaders. At the heart of the Faculty are our students, whose energy, drive, and success are the force behind all that we do.

Research focused...

We are a centre of research excellence, using our scholarship to challenge convention, support communities, and realize a better future. We have a history of scholarly excellence, and with a growing Faculty, we are constantly expanding our reach and scope, bringing exciting new projects to life.

Community engaged...

Over the past 30 years, the Faculty of Native Studies has thrived on the relationships we've built with our faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community partners. From this solid foundation we have emerged as a leader in Indigenous studies, and it is from these relationships that we look to our future. For the Faculty of Native Studies is not just an academic unit, but also a community, a family, a place of refuge, and a site of intellectual revitalization.

Grounded in these strengths, this five-year strategic plan will help the Faculty of Native Studies realize five strategic goals:



BUILD a diverse, inclusive community of exceptional students, faculty, and staff from the diverse Indigenous territories that the Faculty serves. We believe that Indigenous ways of knowing are inherently valuable to all students and all communities, Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike.

EXPERIENCE diverse and rewarding learning opportunities that inspire us, nurture our talents, expand our knowledge and skills, and enable our successes. We believe that experiential learning can help students and communities build lasting change that will produce real-world benefit for Indigenous peoples.

EXCEL as individuals and as a community, and foster personal and intellectual growth among our students, staff, and faculty by providing community- and culturally relevant approaches to teaching, learning, research, and service. In the Faculty of Native Studies, we believe that excellence involves unsettling the status quo and guiding all of us toward a more just relationship between Indigenous people and Canadians.

ENGAGE First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities in Edmonton, in Alberta, in the North, and across Canada, creating reciprocal, mutually beneficial learning experiences for our students and in our research projects, partnerships, and collaborations with faculty members. We believe that by prioritizing community engagement, we will advance Indigenous self-determination, helping to revitalize a treaty-based framework for a shared future.

SUSTAIN our people, our work, and the environment by attracting and stewarding the resources we need to deliver excellence, wellness, and a sustainable workload.

The groundwork for the Faculty of Native Studies Strategic Plan was laid by the many people who make up our community—the students, alumni, community partners, staff, and faculty. It is the collective vision of our people shared over many meetings, surveys, dialogues, and retreats. Its purpose is to propel us into the future, to establish a common path forward and to highlight our collective purpose.

It serves as a starting point from which we will be able to realize these goals and continue to serve as a vital post-secondary link for Indigenous communities locally, regionally, and internationally.

Build

BUILD a diverse, inclusive community of exceptional students, faculty, and staff from the diverse Indigenous territories that the Faculty serves. We believe that Indigenous ways of knowing are inherently valuable to all students and all communities, Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike.

1. Build a student community that reflects the diversity of Indigenous experiences. The Faculty of Native Studies supports a diverse community of students from urban, rural, reserve, and northern Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, and includes people with varied life experiences, comprised of all ages, genders, and sexualities. Working with our recruitment and student support staff, we will continue to develop targeted recruitment and retention strategies to expand our student enrollment, support the educational attainment of working students, and engage in targeted outreach to attract non-Native Studies students to our courses. By expanding our course offerings and engaging in targeted recruiting, the Faculty will ensure the inclusion of underrepresented communities of Indigenous people, creating an enriching learning and research environment for everyone.
2. Recruit and retain outstanding faculty and staff. The Faculty of Native Studies has seen unprecedented growth in the past two years. We will ensure that we produce a robust, fulfilling, and engaging work environment for our faculty and staff, creating an atmosphere in which we treat each other like family. This inclusive view of the Faculty is integral to our ability to attract high-calibre faculty and staff while also keeping our members invested in the future well-being of our FNS family.
3. Develop a home for a strong and diverse Native Studies community on campus. The Faculty of Native Studies is a key support system for many students at the University of Alberta, providing a nurturing space of community and encouragement in a sometimes-alienating environment. Working with our student support team and in collaboration with university student support, including the First Peoples House, we will continue to build spaces of safety, personal growth, and Indigenous vitality, ensuring that all of our students, faculty, and staff feel welcome and at home in the Faculty.
4. Adopt a new name that reflects our values. As the Faculty renews its commitment to diversity and looks to our future, we will engage in a review of our name to ensure that our brand and visual identity continue to reflect our values and the current realities of Indigenous nations. We will undertake extensive community engagement to update our Faculty's name as we move into this new era.



Experience

EXPERIENCE diverse and rewarding learning opportunities that inspire us, nurture our talents, expand our knowledge and skills, and enable our successes. We believe that experiential learning can help students and communities build lasting change that will produce real-world benefit for Indigenous peoples.

1. Employ diverse pedagogical strategies that promote community-driven, land-based, and experiential learning. The Faculty of Native Studies has long emphasized pedagogies that prioritize community engagement. Many of our courses provide unique experiences for our students in community and on-the-land settings, generating educational opportunities based in deep intellectual engagement with Indigenous knowledges. Building on these successes, we will expand the number of courses with experiential learning opportunities in Native Studies, working with the Centre for Teaching and Learning and community partners to support our faculty in developing these opportunities. We will also expand our blended and online learning options while working with our partners and other Indigenous educational institutions to increase course opportunities for students.
2. Prioritize community service pedagogies and research to foster real-world skill development. With our commitment to community-based research and pedagogies through community service, Native Studies students gain valuable experience to prepare them for the next stages of their lives. Our courses expose students to meaningful work in Indigenous communities, allowing them to gain new perspectives and skills to make a difference in the world and to work collaboratively in diverse settings. The Faculty is committed to expanding the number of community-service learning opportunities for our students, and we will ensure that our courses have a positive impact and direct benefit for our partner communities.
3. Make Indigenous language learning a core component of our curriculum. Cree language learning has been a core requirement for Native Studies students for over 30 years. Indigenous language instruction remains a vital component of our degree program and is in regular demand by our students. The Faculty is committed to expanding the linguistic component of our curriculum and increasing the number of Indigenous languages we teach, to reflect the diversity of our students. Working with our instructional team, the Faculty will also expand our existing Cree language-learning opportunities to assist our students as they work toward fluency.
4. Increase cultural learning opportunities offered by Indigenous knowledge holders. A Native Studies education values the integration of Indigenous knowledge, which is best experienced first-hand. Working with the First Peoples House and our community partners, the Faculty is committed to increasing the number of opportunities to engage Indigenous knowledge for our students, faculty, and staff, providing support for cultural mentorship, traditional teachings, and connections with knowledge holders. Connecting our students with cultural practitioners will ensure a deeper relationship to Indigenous ways of knowing and ways of being, supporting the revitalization and transmission of these knowledges, and ultimately enriching what they learn in their classes.



Excel

EXCEL as individuals and as a community, and foster personal and intellectual growth among our students, staff, and faculty by providing community- and culturally relevant approaches to teaching, learning, research, and service. In the Faculty of Native Studies, we believe that excellence involves unsettling the status quo and guiding all of us toward a more just relationship between Indigenous people and Canadians.

1. Be a world leader in Indigenous studies research, teaching, and community service. As a young discipline, Indigenous studies is still in its formative stages, and the Faculty of Native Studies is well-positioned to offer leadership in this dynamic disciplinary environment. We will build distinct disciplinary theory and methods while supporting community-driven research. We will ensure that the Faculty is a leading voice in the international growth of our discipline and that we are well-represented at disciplinary gatherings like the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association. While striving for a global reputation, we will also prioritize local community relationships, particularly among Indigenous peoples of the Prairies and the North.
2. Develop global intellectual leadership in our four areas of strength. The Faculty's recent growth has allowed us to revitalize and consolidate a distinct research focus. We have identified four key areas of research that guide our renewal: Critical Indigenous Theory; Indigenous Peoples and Place; Indigenous Governance; and Indigenous Sexualities and Feminisms. In pursuing these areas, we will increase the number of applications to external funding bodies and prioritize interuniversity and international collaborations in these signature areas. The Faculty will also strategically support experimental approaches to research, including arts-based and creative research projects, in order to expand our areas of expertise.
3. Provide unparalleled support for faculty and students in accessing external and internal funding sources. The Faculty is expanding its research expertise in its four signature areas by obtaining nationally competitive research grants and recruiting talented graduate students within these specializations. Providing institutional support for research grant writing and encouraging the development of team-based research projects, the Faculty will increase the number of external research grant applications and the number of faculty members applying for funding. The Faculty will also ensure that successful research grants will benefit our students and our community partners.
4. Deliver a world-class graduate program that prioritizes the intellectual and professional development of our students. In support of our robust research culture, the Faculty will build a culture of mentorship that supports our students through every stage of graduate education. The Faculty will develop a graduate studies action plan that ensures students' personal and intellectual growth, the development of collaborative research opportunities with faculty members, and the nurturing of a sense of graduate student community in the Faculty.
5. Provide international learning and research opportunities for faculty and students. While remaining committed to local research partnerships, the Faculty of Native Studies will work to create international collaboration projects with other Indigenous studies programs around the world. Working with our international colleagues, the Faculty will support innovative new research partnerships while also providing unique international learning experiences for our students.



Engage

ENGAGE First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities in Edmonton, in Alberta, in the North, and across Canada, creating reciprocal, mutually beneficial learning experiences for our students and in our research projects, partnerships, and collaborations with faculty members. We believe that by prioritizing community engagement, we will advance Indigenous self-determination, helping to revitalize a treaty-based framework for a shared future.

1. Enhance substantial research and teaching collaborations with Indigenous communities. By respecting Indigenous communities as knowledge-holders, the Faculty of Native Studies supports the amplification of Indigenous voices. Using deep practices of community engagement, our collaborations will empower communities to challenge injustice and revitalize cultural practices. Already a leader in local Indigenous community-engaged research, the Faculty will strategically support its researchers in building further collaborations, with specific emphasis on Treaty 6 First Nations, First Nations in the North, the Métis people, Indigenous people who are incarcerated, Indigenous scientists, and Indigenous women and youth.
2. Be a leader in Indigenization and reconciliation, working to transform public perceptions of Indigenous peoples. In the era of reconciliation, the Faculty of Native Studies embraces its duty to educate the Canadian public on Indigenous issues. Building on our free online course, "Indigenous | Canada," we will collaborate with units and programs across the university to develop new programming that supports the mission of the Faculty. Our Faculty remains committed to research and teaching programs on Indigenization and reconciliation policies that have a meaningful impact on the lives of Indigenous people.
3. Build institutional collaborations with Indigenous and Canadian governments that support Indigenous self-determination. The Faculty of Native Studies has established itself as a leader in relations between Indigenous and Canadian governments, particularly through a partnership with Executive Education, the Indigenous Partnership Development Program. The Faculty is committed to the expansion of its governance-oriented programming and the enhancement of its many governmental partnerships. In particular, the Faculty will support the expansion of the Indigenous Governance and Partnership Program as it researches best practices in governance and in educating Indigenous, federal, provincial, and municipal leaders on building better relationships between Indigenous peoples and Canadian institutions.
4. Celebrate our success. The Faculty of Native Studies is home to leading Indigenous studies intellectuals who make notable contributions to the advancement of Indigenous knowledge. We will applaud the major accomplishments of our faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community partners, while also remaining committed to the Indigenous value of humility. By refocusing our communications strategy, we can enhance our public visibility, brand the Faculty more clearly, and demonstrate the many benefits of a Native Studies degree.

Sustain

SUSTAIN our people, our work, and the environment by attracting and stewarding the resources we need to deliver excellence, wellness, and a sustainable workload.

1. Prioritize the health and wellness of students, faculty, and staff by delivering proactive and culturally relevant initiatives that meet the specific needs of our community. Health and well-being are vital components of academic success, and the Faculty of Native Studies is committed to ensuring student, faculty, and staff success does not compromise personal wellness. We are committed to providing the building blocks for holistic and culturally relevant health for all in our community. By supporting physical, cultural, emotional, mental, and spiritual health, we will prepare our people for success in their degree programs and their careers.
2. Ensure sustainability of workload and staffing in the era of reconciliation. The Faculty of Native Studies takes seriously its duty to support new on-campus reconciliation initiatives, but we must do so in ways that are manageable and do not force our staff, faculty, and students to take on the burden of reconciliation labour. As we take on additional responsibilities and leadership roles, we will endeavour to expand our administrative capacity, regularize contract positions, and revise tenure and promotion standards to more accurately reflect the additional administrative labour realities of Native Studies faculty and staff members.
3. Commit to increasing student financial support. The Faculty recognizes the many unique barriers faced by our students, and we are committed to the principle of accessible and affordable education for everyone. The Faculty is committed to prioritizing funding for students admitted to graduate programs and to expanding scholarships available to undergraduate students. Our graduate program is also dedicated to providing substantial grant-writing support for Tri-Council Masters and Doctoral competitions.
4. Secure sustainable space for a growing Faculty. Pembina Hall is the home of our tight-knit Faculty of Native Studies community, a home-away-from-home and a safe space for our students. Yet we face many space-based restrictions for our classes and study spaces, as well as limited office space. The Faculty is committed to ensuring it has space that is accessible to everyone, with room to grow in ways that support the inclusivity, safety, and functionality of the Faculty's home base.



2-31 PEMBINA HALL
University of Alberta

Edmonton, Alberta
Canada, T6G 2H8

nativestudies@ualberta.ca

780.492.2991

nativestudies.ualberta.ca

www.facebook.com/UAlbertaNativeStudies/

[@UANativeStudies](https://twitter.com/UANativeStudies)



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