

UNIVERSITY Sakihtowin For Success
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SAKIHTOWIN (LOVE) - INSTRUMENTAL TO STUDENT SUCCESS

who feel cared for are better prepared to succeed in their academic pursuits as well as experiencing improved social skill development. Research on similar functions of care within the postsecondary environment is scant (i.e. O'Shea & Delahunty, 2018), though we anecdotally hear routinely from University of Alberta students that highlights of their experience include connecting with humans at

journey who genuinely care about their success.

The Cree word "sakihtowin" translates imperfectly to "love" - deep, unquantifiable care for one another. Practicing sakihtowin is a daily imperative for ATEP staff, instructors, and leadership, so ATEP graduates can model these practices in their future teaching careers to the benefit of their future students. Sakihtowin is a

Nehiyaw communities since time immemorial (Elder Calvin Cardinal; Rousell, 2018), and this project will explore its functioning in the **Aboriginal Teacher** Education Program to provide rich insight into how teacher education programs for both Indigenous and no-Indigenous learners can benefit from incorporating sakihtowin alongside academic curricula for holistic student development.

SAKIHTOWIN AND THE TRC

Sakihtowin within a classroom changes the game for FNIM youth, and we know teachers disconnected from their culture are less able to provide a heart-centered experience for students in their classrooms. FNIM K-12 students experience increased racism in their classrooms, antithetical to the aims of the TRC and ATEP, which widens the education and employment gap identified by the TRC. ATEP's sakihtowin-centered practice changes this narrative by contributing to systemic changes in all levels of education, answering the TRC's calls for a brighter, more equitable future for FNIM peoples across Canada.

We envision a future where ATEP graduates in classrooms in all educational settings fosters an improved school ecosystem for Indigenous youth and advances a future with minimized prejudice as non-Indigenous students, colleagues, and leaders learn from ATEP teachers who carry deep ancestral wisdom wherever they go. This advances the TRC's Calls to Action directly for all people, creating a future grounded in reconciliation based in trust, respect, and love. Teachers have an outsized impact on the world around them, and their long-term impact on changing hearts and minds through their sakihtowin and nîkânewin is immeasurable. ATEP works towards a reenvisioned future where FNIM communities and individuals have equitable access to education through innovative programming; we are already a national leader in FNIM teacher education, and hope to share our experiences with this project widely to support similar iterations across the country. When FNIM teacher education is collectively uplifted through sakihtowin, Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth are the ultimate beneficiaries, and FNIM individuals and communities can partake in a future miles away from systemic harms of the past and bringing the TRC's vision for a reconciliatory future to reality.

METHODS

This project will be completed through the Spring and Summer 2024 terms, beginning May 1, 2024. This student-led project is supported by the University of Alberta Faculty of Education and Roger S. Smith Undergraduate Researcher Award.

To explore how sakihtowin influences student success (academic, professional, and personal), we will conduct a qualitative survey offered to ATEP students and alumni. Participants will have the option to participate in a follow-up interview. The data will be thematically coded and analyzed to reveal how sakhitowin has impacted academic, personal, and professional success, what tools for mobilizing sakihtowin in postsecondary education have been effective in supporting this success, and how ATEP students conceptualize sakihtowin in their own practices.

This project offers the opportunity for an undergraduate student to gain invaluable experience in multiple facets of research design, implementation, analysis, and writing, Indigenous educational leaders are highly sought after in school and other settings, and we have designed this project to position the successful Roger Smith Award recipient as a future educational leader with ample experience to support their future studies and careers.

LITERATURE

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