

RDC commits to Indigenous education and opportunities by signing CICan Indigenous Education Protocol

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Red Deer College officially recognized its responsibility to Indigenous education today with the signing of the Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICan) Indigenous Education Protocol.

“This is a very important day for Red Deer College because it demonstrates our commitment and responsibility to Indigenous learners and partners from across this region,” says Joel Ward, RDC President & CEO. “Over the past several years, we have been increasing our work on a variety of areas to support and enhance Indigenous opportunities. This Protocol is both a recognition of what has been happening and also a foundation on which we will continue to grow.”

With the signing, RDC is affirming its responsibility and obligation to Indigenous education in the spirit of Truth and Reconciliation. The Protocol is founded on seven key principles, which range from making Indigenous education a priority to establishing Indigenous-centred holistic services and learning environments for learner success.

"Red Deer College has been a great member of this community and this is another example of being a great community member. This protocol signing is a tremendous example of the College's commitment towards reconciliation and leadership, dealing with indigenous relationship building. It is also very important in the development of our indigenous youth to feel appreciated and welcomed in a place of higher learning," says Brian Lizotte, President of the Metis Nation of Alberta Region 3 Local 492. "Speaking on behalf of myself, my family and the Metis community I would like to express my gratitude to the President and the Board of Red Deer College; also, to congratulate them on their growth; both in becoming a University and their continued leadership in community and relationship building."

RDC's recent collaborations and partnerships have led to a number of initiatives that support Indigenous education. In 2018, "Building Bridges: An Indigenous Strategic Plan for Red Deer College" was released. Made possible through broad consultation with Indigenous communities and Elders, as well as faculty, staff and Indigenous students at RDC, this plan provides guiding principles for future work.

With the signing of the CIGan Indigenous Education Protocol, RDC is formalizing the direction it has taken with the plan. "Through the strong partnerships we already have with Indigenous communities and those we will continue to build, this institution is in an excellent position to enhance and create meaningful opportunities for Indigenous learners," says Ward. "We are able to honour and realize the principles in this Protocol, which will create a path for a positive future."

After the signing of the Protocol, Red Deer College, Indigenous partners and guests celebrated with a Tea Dance. The ceremonial event, which was led by Elders, honoured the achievements of Indigenous students and graduates.

Additional information on the CIGan Indigenous Education Protocol is available [online](#) [1]. Red Deer College's Indigenous Education Strategic Plan can be found on RDC's [website](#) [2].

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Photo caption: *Back row (l-r):* Gilles Allard, RDC Board of Governors; Dr. Claudine Louis, President, Maskwacis Cultural College; Charlene Burns, RDC Board of Governors; Elder Melvin Potts; and Brian Lizotte, President, Metis Nation of Alberta Region 3 Local 492. *Front row:* Joel Ward, RDC President & CEO.

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