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REPORTS ON TRC INITIATIVES (2023–2025)

PREAMBLE

Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was established in 2008 as part of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, the largest class-action lawsuit in Canadian history until this year. It provided those directly or indirectly affected by the legacy of the Indian Residential Schools system with the opportunity to share their stories and experiences. After six years of travelling across Canada, hearing from more than 6,500 witnesses, the TRC released a final report with their findings in 2015. In addition to this report, the TRC put forth 94 Calls to Action for groups and people across Canada to do their part in advancing the efforts of reconciliation in light of these atrocious events.

In the years, following, the University of Toronto responded to the TRC Calls to Action through *Wecheehetowin*, the University of Toronto's Response to the TRC Calls to Action (2017), followed by a response and calls to action in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences' Response to the TRC's Calls to Action. In 2018, University College established a committee to develop recommendations for the college's participation in the national project of Truth and Reconciliation. This committee comprised students, staff, faculty, UC administrators, and representatives from First Nations House (FNH), the Centre for Indigenous Studies (CIS), and the Department for the Study of Religion. University College's committee conducted a review of all facets of college operations with the following objective:

"Our aim is to build a foundation for University College to make the process of Truth and Reconciliation basic to our operations, to provide suggestions for improvement of our current processes and delivery of services, and to promote the telling of truth about the interactions between University College and the Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island."

The UC Committee released a report in 2019, which among other calls committed UC to releasing biennial reports on our progress. Copies of these reports can be found on the Indigenous at UC webpage. To further build on these efforts, in 2023, UC commissioned an external review by Indigenous consultant Felicity Oien to provide a framework for the college's next phase of truth and reconciliation. Among the many recommendations in her report was the creation of a website publicly documenting UC's progress in response to the TRC's Calls to Action.

The following report provides a summary of items presented at College Council on 14 November 2025, on TRC-related initiatives undertaken at UC between 2023-2025; it was brought back to College Council for discussion on 30 January 2026. The report includes a brief overview of the Indigenous at UC webpage, which went live in summer 2025, and highlights from the brief reports by senior UC managers. At the November 2025 Council meeting, Professor Susan Hill, Director, Centre for Indigenous Studies, and Emma Stromberg, A&S Special Projects Officer, Indigenous Partnership, also gave a presentation on broader A&S priorities and efforts. In addition, the UC Literary and Athletic Society shared their own TRC reflections and priorities.

OVERVIEW OF THE "INDIGENOUS AT UC" HUB ON THE UC WEBSITE

The "Indigenous at UC" hub (i.e. the "Hub") launched on the University College website in the summer of 2025 after consultant Felicity Oien recommended that the college develop a publicly facing tracking tool which would document UC's progress towards fulfilling the 94 Calls to Action set forth by Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

The tracking tool, alongside the consolidation, presentation, and provision of other relevant UC information and resources, was grouped together and 'hubbed' into the "Indigenous at UC" hub, which exists in its current form on the UC website.

The Hub is accessible on the homepage of the UC website and under the 'About' section of the website's main navigation menu. The Hub was created to make the reconciliation work already happening at the college more transparent and easily accessible, including clear truth-telling about the college's colonial history, its reconciliation progress to date, and details of its ongoing treaty commitments. The Hub also serves to provide relevant resources to current and prospective Indigenous stakeholders.

The Hub comprises five main sections:

> (1) The "Indigenous at UC" landing page, which features a written overview that underpins the information, initiatives, and resources inside the Hub and the institutional motivation for their undertaking. This page also features the University of Toronto's formal Land Acknowledgement, and a dynamic list of relevant UC news and events as they appear throughout the website's news and events sections (including the homepage).
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> (2) An informational page about the treaty land on which UC resides and an overview of its ongoing treaty commitments.
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> (3) An informational page about the colonial history of the land on which UC resides, and the endowments which financed the construction of the University College building.
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> (4) The 'Tracking Tool', which itself comprises:
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> > (4.1) An overview page outlining the history of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the history of UC's response to the 94 Calls to

Action in the context of the broader university, hotlinks to the five sections of the tracking tool, and hotlinks to downloadable versions of UC's past written reports (2019, 2021, 2023).

(4.2) Five tracking subpages which document the college's progress in the following areas:

4.2.1 "Truth-telling and UC's role in the project of colonization"

4.2.2 "Integrating Indigenous perspectives into the UC curricula"

4.2.3 "Training for faculty, staff, students"

4.2.4 "Enhancing supports and services for Indigenous students"

4.2.5 "Supporting Indigenous spaces & cultural practices"

Actions undertaken in each of these categories are grouped according to how they respond to an original recommendation made by UC's 2019 TRC committee. Each themed tracking page also lists the overarching goal of the actions taken to fulfill the original 2019 recommendations.

In the case that an action is conducted or completed outside the scope of UC's 2019 TRC committee's original recommendations, the action is grouped with the closest match from the 2019 recommendations, or given its own listing in an "Other Actions Taken" section, which appears at the bottom of every applicable page.

Actions are marked with a checkmark, full circle, or hollow dot icon, indicating that the action is complete, ongoing, or in planning, respectively.

In the case where actions are ongoing because they occur continuously (i.e. with no foreseeable end) *or* they are actions that are not yet complete, they are designated as an "ongoing action".

(5) A resource section ("Further Resources") which collects relevant resources for current and prospective Indigenous students, faculty and staff.

As a web product, the contents of the Hub can be expanded or reorganized as community needs may change. The contents of the Hub, including all text, photo, and video information, are integrated throughout the UC website in search functions and hyperlink features. As such, the content is also indexed into major search engines, including traditional web and AI search.

UC-WIDE TRC-RELATED ACTIVITIES (2023 – 2025)

- September 30 (2023, 2024, 2025): UC has sought to recognize National Day for Truth and Reconciliation or what is also called Orange Shirt Day—along with other units on campus and as encouraged by the Office of Indigenous Initiatives and First Nations House

- Fall, 2024: UC opened its space (PCCC) to the "Gathering our little shoes" event which focused on "Indigenous-led, divisional approaches to reconciliation" and was followed by a Round Dance in the UC Quad
    - https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/news/gathering-our-little-shoes-panel-discussion-reflects-indigenous-led-divisional-approaches

- Fall, 2024: UC organized two Indigenous walking tours of campus by First Story with over forty staff and academic leaders participating across the two tours

- Andrew Bomberry, Special Projects Officer (Curriculum and Education) spoke to UC college council (Fall, 2024) about the work that his office does

UC ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

- About twenty UC instructors and other faculty participated in an Indigenizing the Curriculum workshop in October 2024 with Andrew Bomberry, Special Projects Officer (Curriculum and Education)
    - An interactive session that supported the practice of indigenizing curriculum by exploring Indigenous epistemologies. Participants were encouraged to apply an Indigenous framework for Indigenizing their own syllabi.

- In consultation with the Centre for Indigenous Studies, Canadian Studies has revised its curriculum to require that all Majors and Specialists take a course through the Centre for Indigenous Studies: INS200H: Indigenous Truth and Resilience.

UC BARKER FAIRLEY DISTINGUISHED VISITORSHIP IN CANADIAN CULTURE

- **Ange Loft - Barker Fairley Distinguished Visitor 2023-2024:**

  Ange Loft is [Mohawk] Kanien'kehá:ka from Kahnawà:ke. She has an extensive history of theatrical co-creation, Indigenous context generation, wearable sculpture and experimental music that are image first and rhythm forward. She writes, directs, and co-designs large scale, multi-form projects, creating workshops, installations, art films, and publications in tandem with her work, including the *Talking Treaties* suite that explored the Indigenous treaty history of the Toronto area and inspired active treaty awareness.

- **Wanda Nanibush - Barker Fairley Distinguished Visitor 2025-2026:**

  Wanda Nanibush is an Anishinaabe-kwe image and word warrior, curator and community organizer from Beausoleil First Nation, Canada. Nanibush is the founding director of aabaakwad, an international yearly gathering of Indigenous curators, writers and artists for talks and performances. She recently won the Toronto Book Award (2023) for her co-authored book *Moving the Museum* [with Georgiana Uhlyarik] which chronicles some of her groundbreaking

work at the Art Gallery of Ontario as the Inaugural curator of Indigenous Art. She has curated survey, group, and retrospective exhibitions of key artists such as Robert Houle and Rebecca Belmore. Nanibush has published widely on Indigenous art, politics, history, feminism and sexuality.

UC ENDOWED LECTURE SERIES

- **Deborah McGregor - N. Graham Lecture in Science, "Decolonizing Conservation: Living in Harmony with Nature" (Fall 2023)**

  Deborah McGregor is Anishinaabe from Whitefish River First Nation, Birch Island, Ontario. She was a Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Environmental Justicecross-appointed between Osgoode Hall Law School and the Faculty of Environmental Studies & Urban Change at York University. Her research focuses on Indigenous knowledge systems and their various applications in diverse contexts including water and environmental governance, environmental justice, forest policy and management, and sustainable development. She has co-edited *Indigenous Peoples and Autonomy: Insights for a Global Age* (2010), and the *Anishinaabewin* conference proceedings series.

- **Glen Coulthard – F.E.L. Priestley Memorial Lectures in the History of Ideas, "Maoism without Guarantees: Third World Influences on Fourth World Anti-Colonialism in Three Parts" (Fall 2023)**

  Glen Coulthard is Yellowknives Dene and an associate professor in First Nations and Indigenous Studies and in the Department of Political Science at UBC. He has written and published numerous articles and chapters in the areas of contemporary political theory, indigenous thought and politics, and radical social and political thought (Marxism, anarchism, post-colonialism). He is the author of the award-winning book, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (2014). He is also a co-founder of Dechinta Centre for Research and Learning, a decolonial, Indigenous land-based post-secondary program operating on his traditional territories in Denendeh (Northwest Territories).

- **Alanis Obomsawin - R.K. Teetzel Lecture in Art, "The Children Have to Hear Another Story," in conversation with Cameron Bailey (Fall 2023)**

  Alanis Obomsawin is an Abenaki artist and activist, and one of the most acclaimed Indigenous directors in the world. She began her career as a professional singer and storyteller before joining the NFB in 1967. She has created an extraordinary body of work—50 films and counting—including landmark documentaries like *Incident at Restigouche* (1984) and *Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance* (1993). Her award-winning films address the struggles of Indigenous peoples from their perspective, giving prominence to voices that have long been marginalized. She is Companion of the Order of Canada and the Ordre des arts et des lettres du Québec, a Grand Officer of the Ordre national du Quebec

and a Commander of the Order of Montreal. She has received the Prix Albert-Tessier and the Canadian Screen Awards' Humanitarian Award, as well as multiple Governor General's Awards, lifetime achievement awards, and honorary degrees, among many other honours.

- **Warren Carriou – W.J. Alexander Lecture in English Literature, "Petromimesis: Carbon Kinship and Reflections in Stone" (Fall 2024)**

  Warren Carriou is a Métis writer, photographer and professor in the Department of English, Theatre, Film & Media at the University of Manitoba. His work focuses on the environmental philosophies and oral traditions of Indigenous peoples in western Canada, especially in connection to his Métis heritage. He has published works of memoir, fiction, poetry and film, and he has also edited numerous books of Indigenous literature and storytelling. His films and his bitumen photographs document the experience of Indigenous communities in the Athabasca tar sands region near his home community of Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan.

- **Jordan Abel – F.E.L. Priestley Memorial Lectures in the History of Ideas, "Tomorrow Is a Dream: Nisga'a Futurity and Anti-Colonial Poetics" (Fall 2025)**

  Jordan Abel is a queer Nisga'a writer from Vancouver and Associate Professor in the Department of English and Film Studies at the University of Alberta. He is the author of *The Place of Scraps* (winner of the Dorothy Livesay Poetry Prize), *Un/inhabited*, and *Injun* (winner of the Griffin Poetry Prize). *NISHGA* won both the Hubert Evans Non-Fiction Prize and the VMI Betsy Warland Between Genres award and was a finalist for the Hilary Weston Writers' Trust Prize for Nonfiction, the Wilfrid Eggleston Award for Nonfiction, and the Roderick Haig-Brown Regional Prize.

UC CONVOCATION: INDIGENOUS HONORARY DEGREE RECIPIENTS

- **Successful nomination of Robert Houle for honorary doctorate (Spring 2023)**

  Robert Houle is an internationally recognized artist, curator, critic and educator. He grew up in Sandy Bay First Nation / Kaa-wii-kwe-tawang-kak in Manitoba where he was immersed in the Anishnaabe Saulteaux [Plains Ojibway] community. After being removed from his community to a residential school in Sandy Bay, he continued to pursue his studies and develop his artistic practice. Houle's work addresses lingering aspects of colonialism and their effects on Indigenous peoples.

- **Successful nomination of Zacharias Kunuk for honorary doctorate (Spring 2025)**

  Zacharias Kunuk is a filmmaker, sculptor and visual artist in Iglulik (Igloolik), NU. His debut feature film *Atanarjuat (The Fast Runner)*(2001) was the first Canadian feature film produced entirely in Inuktitut and won six Genie Awards. Kunuk is the co-founder of Isuma Productions [with Norman Cohn and Pauloosie Qulitalik], the first independent Inuit-led film production company in Canada. He has redefined Canadian filmmaking and been at the forefront of innovative use of broadcast technology in the North.

NEWLY ESTABLISHED UC STUDENT AWARDS AND BURSARIES

- **The Neelin Memorial Award (2025)**
  - Awarded to University College students enrolled full-time in any year of undergraduate studies on the basis of good academic standing, with preference for Indigenous students.

- **Salia Michael Memorial Bursary at the University of Toronto (2025)**
  - Awarded to an undergraduate Indigenous student registered at University College on the basis of financial need.

- **University College Books Bursary at the University of Toronto (2024)**
  - Awarded to University College students enrolled full-time in any year of undergraduate studies on the basis of financial need and good academic standing. Preference will be given to Indigenous students.

- **Stanley Griffin Award at the University of Toronto (2024)**
  - Awarded on the basis of financial need to second or third year students at University College, with preference given to Black and/or Indigenous students.

Although the awards above provide *specific preference* to Indigenous students, it is noted that Indigenous students qualify for all of our college's other 300+ awards as well. Most of UC's awards do not require any application, and all Indigenous students at UC are automatically considered for all of them.

UC STUDENT GRANTS

- **Indigenous Student Grants Disbursed (September 2023 – August 2025)**
  - A total of $49,750 in need-based grant funding has been awarded by the AARO to self-identified Indigenous UC students through the U of T Grant Application process.

  - Twelve (12) grants were awarded to self-identified Indigenous students during this time period.

- Grant amounts ranged from $1,000 - $10,000, and the average grant awarded was $3,827.

UC RESIDENCES AND STUDENT LIFE

- Year 2 of our Residence Curriculum implementation. Our RC informs all our student engagement efforts, service delivery, programming, assessment efforts and training and development supporting all our student leadership activities in the residences. Outlines 4 learning goals, 1 of which focuses on Reconciliation and Decolonization – outlines many learning outcomes for student engagement tied to their experience in residence.

- Effective Fall 2025, UC implemented an upper year residence guarantee for Indigenous Students along with other constituent colleges of the Faculty of Arts & Science. UC has 2 students participating in this program, 1 living in UC residences and another at Innis. Innis provides suite style accommodation that is more amenable to students seeking a more independent living experience.

Areas of development:

- Finding ways to harmonize the upper year guarantee with our existing upper year and returning residence application process as the timelines this past cycle were many months apart – these inconsistencies in timelines, communication and navigation of a complex processes can create significant barriers for students to engage with initiatives.

- One of the recommendations of previous reports was the implementation of Indigenous living learning communities (LLCs) in UC residences. LLCs require a critical mass of students to be effective, engaging, and sustainable over time (20-30 students). Continuing to support and implement initiatives like the upper-year residence guarantee is geared towards attain that critical mass, so that UC can move to the conversations of implementing more robust and responsive programming experiences that meet the needs of and support the success of our Indigenous students.

UC LIBRARY

- **Book Displays:**
  The library organized several thematic and event-aligned book displays throughout 2025-26, including:
  - A feature display for David A. Robertson's *52 Ways to Reconcile* during its book launch.
  - Truth and Reconciliation reading recommendations, offered in both physical and digital formats.
  - A curated showcase of exhibition catalogues by Wanda Nanibush, Barker Fairley Distinguished Visitor.

These displays support ongoing efforts to highlight Indigenous voices, particularly around key dates such as Orange Shirt Day and Indigenous Celebration Month (June).

- **Collection Development:**
    - The library continues to strengthen its holdings of works by Indigenous authors and publishers. Recent acquisitions include titles from Kegedonce Press, Arvaaq Press, GoodMinds and Theytus Books as well as additional collection purchases from Canadian small presses such as Indigenous publisher: Mawenzi House.

    - The library also acquired the remaining volumes of Phyllis Gotleib's works, completing the set of publications by the UC alumna and pioneering Canadian science-fiction writer.