

— Spring Issue 2026 —

Quarterly Newsletter

Indigenous Advanced Education & Skills Council



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Welcome!

Wacheya, She:Kon, Aaniin; Greetings!

It's exciting and it's an honour to be part of our inaugural newsletter here at the Indigenous Advanced Education and Skills Council (IAESC). The "Council" is not new, having been established following the creation of the Indigenous Institutes Act (2017); however, for many outside of the Institute Pillar, IAESC is relatively unknown.

Over the last several years, the Council staff have been working very hard to review our processes, procedures, and internal structures so that we may act in accordance with our mandate; and, support each of the 9 Indigenous Institutes in whatever area of need they may have and at whatever state of readiness they may be in.



We recently hosted and facilitated our annual “Indigenous Institutes Dialogue” with the Institutes, our friends at the Indigenous Institutes Consortium (IIC) and of course, the Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security (MCURES).

Meeting with Institute partners and collaborating on numerous levels not only is consistent with our strategic priority of strengthening the Indigenous post-secondary pillar but also strengthening and continuing to develop good relationships for the benefit of First Nation learners.

At present, we continue to expand our work so that we may be able to apply standards and benchmarks for graduate studies and terminal degree programs; as well as grow our presence by working with several professional regulatory bodies so that students can benefit from a joint pathway of recognition, upon completion of their studies.

In closing, as the Council continues to act on its new strategic communications plan, we hope that more partners and supporters will become familiar with the increasingly important work of Indigenous post-secondary education.

Miiweh, Nyweh,

Sean Monteith
Executive Director

Seasonal Reflections

Spring | Ziigwan | Sîkwan | Kenkwitè:ne

Spring is a time of transformation. We watch as the land changes while the snow melts away and the mama bear emerges from her den with her cubs.

Spring feels like magic after a cold winter, the warmth of the sun on our skin and the sight of tulips starting to bloom...We pause to think, reflect, and give thanks for all that winter has brought us this year.

Stepping into Ziigwan, we want to acknowledge this month's moon teaching. To some this moon is known as the Sugar Bush Moon, Broken Snowshoe Moon, Pink Moon or Breaking Ice Moon.

The first full moon of the season reminds us that Ziigwan brings new life, tasty sap from the sugar bush trees, and a renewed sense of intention as we move forward into this new season.

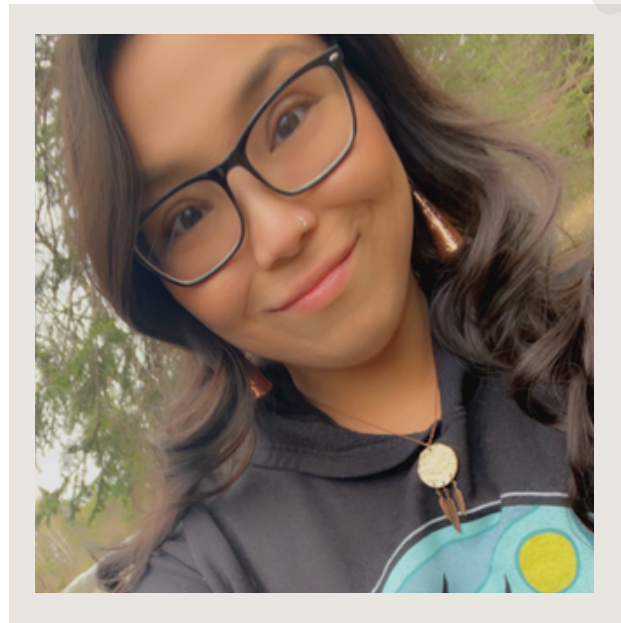
Welcoming Cheyenne Tibishkogijig to the IAESC Board of Directors

In the teachings of our old ones, knowledge is a gift that carries responsibility. It is not only for oneself, but for the generations that came before us and those yet to come.

I chose to study at Oshki Pimache-O-Win because it is more than a place of learning. It is a space where our ways, our stories, and our identities are honored.

The environment here carries the teachings of our Elders, fostering respect, connection, and understanding. It is a circle of support where students are supported to grow not only academically, but spiritually and emotionally, surrounded by people who share a commitment to community and culture.

Learning in this space reminds me that education is not separate from who we are, it is a path that strengthens our resilience, our sense of belonging, and our ability to give back to our communities. At Oshki Pimache-O-Win, learning feels like coming home, and every lesson carries the responsibility to use knowledge for the good of our people.



I chose the Mental Health and Addictions Worker program in hopes to support our communities as we face challenges together, to help create pathways for healing, and to uplift the voices of our people. As a member of the IAESC Board, I hope to bring the student perspective, sharing the experiences within Indigenous post-secondary institutions and helping address the barriers students may face, while ensuring our communities continue to thrive with knowledge, pride, and resilience.

Cheyenne Tibishkogijig

Share your Story

We would love to hear about your experience learning at an Indigenous Institute and where your journey has lead you to today.

 communications@iaesc.ca



Annual Indigenous Institutes Dialogue Meeting

In January, IAESC hosted the annual Indigenous Institutes dialogue meeting with the 9 Indigenous Institutes. This annual meeting is a time to reflect on and discuss moments, milestones, and priorities that continue to shape Indigenous post-secondary education.

We extend our deepest gratitude to each of the Indigenous Institutes for taking part in this meeting.

The meeting concluded with recognition of the Indigenous Institutes who successfully achieved approvals for organization and program reviews in 2025.

We would also like to acknowledge our partners who were in attendance throughout the meeting, meegwetch, nya:wen, thank you to Indigenous Institutes Consortium and the Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security for joining us.



Organization approvals recognized:

Oshki-Pimache-O-Win Education and Training Institute

Shingwauk Kinoomaage Gamig

Program approvals recognized:

Six Nations Polytechnic

Advanced Diploma in Qgwehqwew Language

Kenjgewin Teg

Certificate in Indigenous Studies

First Nations Technical Institute

Certificate II Rotary Wing

Bachelor with Honours in Indigenous Justice

Bachelor with Honours in Indigenous Social Work



Quality Assurance

Updates and Approvals

On March 6, 2026, the Indigenous Institutes Quality Assessment Board (IIQAB) held its quarterly committee meeting.

At this meeting, the following approvals were granted:

Organization Review Approval

Ogwehoweh Skills and Trades Training Centre

Program Review Approvals

Six Nations Polytechnic
Diploma Program: Teacher Education

First Nations Technical Institute
Diploma Program: Teacher of Indigenous Language

The next IIQAB meeting is scheduled for May 29, 2026. Learn more about IIQAB by visiting [our website](#).

Interested in joining IIQAB or an Expert Panel?

Reach out to us today!

 qa@iaesc.ca

Institute Spotlight

Ogwehoweh Skills & Trades Training Centre



Learn more at osttc.com

As one of the few Indigenous Institutes uniquely positioned to focus on trades and skilled training, OSTTC demonstrated the strength of their programs, governance, and commitment to supporting learners in pathways that lead directly to meaningful employment during the organizational review process. Their leadership in trades education not only helps to build a strong Indigenous workforce but also strengthens community capacity and economic development.

This milestone is a testament to the hard work of the Institutes team, led by Erin Monture - President, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, instructors and community partners who continue to shape programs rooted in Indigenous knowledge and ways of being. Their efforts ensure that learners can access training that honours their identity while preparing learners for success in high-demand trades and technical careers.

Congratulations, OSTTC! This is an important step forward for Indigenous-led post-secondary education and workforce development.

Graduate Standards for Master's Programs at Indigenous Institutes in Ontario

Since July 2025, IAESC's Graduate Standards Steering Committee, in collaboration with Indigenous Institutes and Indigenous quality assurance Co-Leads Dr. Lana Ray and Dr. Stephanie Roy, have advanced the development of Indigenous-led Graduate Standards and Benchmarks for master's-level programming. The standards are grounded in educational sovereignty and an Indigenous graduate profile emphasizing "able helpers" and community-centred change-makers.

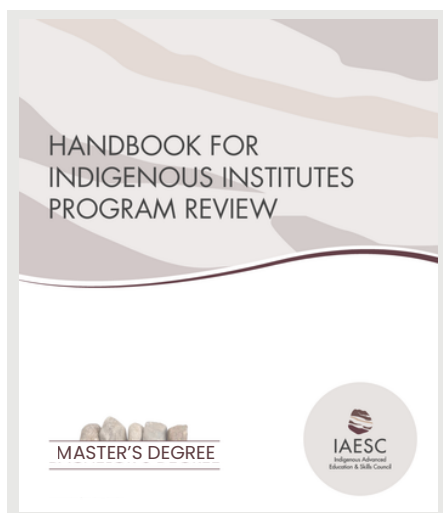
The Steering Committee has applied a bottom-up, story- and learner-journey methodology, informed by focus groups of graduate students and Knowledge Carriers that underscored the centrality of land-based learning, ceremony and culture, trauma-informed supports, and flexible pathways that enable learners to remain connected to community.



On January 28, 2026, an evidence gathering and hands-on session was held to test and strengthen the formation of the draft standards, across knowledge, identity, ethics, research, and employability. The draft standards have been developed to align with—while not being constrained by—the Ontario Qualifications Framework.

Current work is focused on consolidating and finalizing the master's standards framework and preparing it for Steering Committee review in spring/summer, with an anticipated formal release in 2026.

Stay tuned for the launch of the new standards and benchmarks!



Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge and thank the Indigenous Institutes for all that they do. Indigenous Institutes provide safe learning spaces where culture and commitment to the student wellbeing come first. These are learning spaces where Indigenous students can thrive, come together, and create new relationships that will last a life time. We are honoured to support the work of each of the Institutes. Together, we ensure that our work is rooted in student success, culture, language, reciprocity, and community.

Learn more about the Institutes by visiting iaesc.ca.



Latest News

Ontario Announces Historical Funding Investment for Indigenous Institutes

This funding will help to build capacity within Indigenous Institutes in the areas of independent program development and priority partnership programs. We extend our gratitude to the Ontario Government for its commitment to Indigenous post-secondary education.

Upcoming Events

April 21 - 23, 2026 - Ottawa, ON
2026 CIGAN Connections Conference

June 16, 2026 - Hamilton, ON
Inaugural National Forum on Post-Secondary Quality Assurance

June 16 - 19, 2026 - Hamilton, ON
2026 Annual Conference - Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education

Career Opportunities

Visit the links below to explore available career opportunities:

- [FNTI](#)
- [Six Nations Polytechnic](#)
- [Kenjgewin Teg](#)
- [Oshki-Pimache-O-Win](#)
- [Shingwauk Kinoomaage Gamig](#)
- [College of Early Childhood Educators](#)



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