

— Summer Issue 2026 —

Quarterly Newsletter

Indigenous Advanced Education & Skills Council



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IAESC
Indigenous Advanced
Education & Skills Council

Welcome!

In this issue we share updates from the IAESC team including the welcoming of our three summer interns, the development of the Master's Degree Standards Handbook and a new Annual Report for Indigenous Institutes!

Seasonal Reflections

Summer | Niibin | Nîpin | Akenhnha:ke

We begin this issue with our seasonal reflections, acknowledging the start of the summer season and the Strawberry Moon. The teachings of the Strawberry Moon remind us to let go, lead with love, come together, and welcome the new growth that is to come this season.



Wacheya, She:Kon, Aaniin; Greetings!

As we welcome the summer season, I reflect on this being a time of gathering, growth, and achievement, and I extend my heartfelt congratulations to all graduates at the Indigenous Institutes. Your dedication and commitment to learning are inspiring, and we celebrate your success as you move forward on your educational and professional journeys. June also provides an opportunity to recognize Indigenous History Month and National Indigenous Peoples Day. These occasions invite us to celebrate the culture, language, and history of Indigenous Peoples, while reflecting on the ongoing work of strengthening Indigenous education and advancing opportunities for future generations. Over the past several months, I have had the privilege of visiting Indigenous Institutes and communities across Ontario, meeting with leaders, staff, and learners.

These conversations have reinforced the incredible innovation, dedication, and learner-centred approaches that exist at each Indigenous Institute. During the launch of our last newsletter, we were celebrating the successful completion of the Organizational Review for the Ogwehoweh Skills and Trades Training Centre. At this time, we continue to support the Anishinabek Educational Institute with their Organizational Review, which is quite exciting as they are the final Indigenous Institute to go through this approval process.

As IAESC continues to grow, we are honoured to see an increase in the recognition of our work on a national scale, with interest and outreach from across the country, including Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Quebec, looking to learn more about the approach we are taking with quality assurance and support of the Indigenous Institutes. This growing recognition reflects the strength of the Indigenous postsecondary education sector and the important work being undertaken by all. We have the right people in the right places, and our progress is a direct result of the dedication, expertise, and collaborative efforts of the Indigenous Institutes and IAESC. Together, we remain well positioned to support the continued growth of the Indigenous Institutes and to lead the quality assurance work for the sector.

As we move into the summer months, I encourage everyone to take time to rest, reconnect, and enjoy time with family, friends, and community. Summer offers opportunities to gather, celebrate, and appreciate the beauty and abundance that surround us. On behalf of IAESC, I wish you a safe, enjoyable, and restorative summer season.

Miigwech,

Sean Monteith
Executive Director

Welcoming the 2026 Summer Interns!



Naomi Fletcher

Indigenous Knowledge Repository
Support Assistant
Native Community Worker
Anishinabek Education Institute

Hello! Naomi here - I am a proud member of Matachewan First Nation in Treaty 9 territory, with family roots in Waskaganish, Quebec, and the Moose River area. Growing up in Timmins, Ontario, I have always maintained a strong connection to my Indigenous identity, community, and the teachings that guide my personal and professional journey. Through both my education and work experiences where I supported Indigenous youth, I have developed a passion for helping communities strengthen their capacity through culturally grounded programs and services. My studies focus on Indigenous approaches to healing, community wellness, advocacy, and cultural knowledge.

I understand the importance of ensuring Indigenous teachings, resources, and community knowledge are accessible to current and future generations. This opportunity aligns with my interests in research, information management, and community-based learning. I am excited to build my skills while supporting a project that honours Indigenous voices, cultures, languages, and ways of knowing.



Rayne Gunn

Education Assistant
Bachelor of Education
Lakehead University

Hi, I'm Rayne! Throughout my studies, I have developed a strong interest in Indigenous history and education. I am excited to bring that passion to my work at IAESC. I am passionate about the intersection of education and advocacy, specifically the role that education plays in supporting Indigenous self-determination, community well-being and cultural revitalization. I have found both inspiration and solace in Indigenous art, crafts, and cultural practices. As someone living with Endometriosis, I found great comfort in engaging with Indigenous arts and practices that offered meaningful opportunities for personal reflection, connection, and healing. As a person of Indigenous heritage, my connection to Indigenous education and advocacy is deeply personal. Learning more about my own family history and the broader experiences of Indigenous peoples has strengthened my commitment to supporting Indigenous rights and self-determination.

Joining IAESC is a valuable opportunity to combine my passions for education, advocacy, and community-well-being. I look forward to contributing to work that supports Indigenous learners and communities while helping create meaningful opportunities for connection, empowerment, and positive change.



Summer Bayer

Research and Policy Assistant
Bachelor of Arts in Conflict Studies
and Human Rights
University of Ottawa

Hello, I'm Summer. I am from Manitoulin Island, my community is Aundeck Omni Kaning (AOK) which means where the crow's nest. I have a strong interest in Indigenous issues, human rights, public policy, and social justice. My studies have allowed me to explore topics such as conflict resolution, inequality, governance, and advocacy, while my role at IAESC has provided valuable hands-on experience in research, policy support, and event coordination. One of the things I enjoy most about my work is the opportunity to contribute to initiatives that support Indigenous learners and help strengthen access to education and skills development. I am passionate about learning from others, building meaningful relationships, and supporting projects that create positive impacts. Through both my academic and professional experiences, I have developed skills in research, communication, organization, and collaboration.

I value working with diverse perspectives and believe that meaningful change comes from listening, learning, and working together. In the future, I am pursuing a career in law, public policy, and government. I am excited to continue learning, growing, and contributing to work that makes a difference.

Indigenous Institutes Graduation Ceremonies

We want to extend our heartfelt congratulations to all 2026 graduates! IAESC has had the honour of attending a number of graduation ceremonies at the Indigenous Institutes over the last few weeks. IAESC staff have been present at the following graduation ceremonies:

- Six Nations Polytechnic
- First Nations Technical Institute
- Oshki-Pimache-O-Win: The Wenjack Institute
- Ogwehoweh Skills and Trades Training Centre
- Iohahi:io Akwesasne Education and Training Centre

We had the privilege of presenting our annual Indigenous Student Award to a number of recipients. We would like to recognize this year's award recipients.

- Lacey Anderson
- Lindsay Porter
- Samantha Maracle
- Waylon Cook
- Andrew Keno
- Kelly Tarbell
- Charlene Sterling Owl
- Tanika Kejick
- Ogimaabinesiik Anna Mainville
- Stephanie Sutherland
- Walter Roy
- Wanda Atlookan-Sugarhead

Additional recipients to be announced.



Annual Student Award

Resiliency and Achievement in Indigenous Education

This award is intended to recognize and acknowledge Indigenous students who have overcome adversity and demonstrated resiliency towards the completion of their respective studies. On an annual basis at the end of the academic year, each Indigenous Institute will award one student with the Resiliency and Achievement in Indigenous Education Award.

Indigenous Institute Spotlight:

Shingwauk Kinoomaage Gamig



Recently, Shingwauk Kinoomaage Gamig submitted and received approval for their first standalone program, after receiving Organization Review approval in August 2025.

The Anishinaabe Gikendaasowin: Undergraduate Certificate is a one-year, hybrid program designed to deepen learners' understanding of Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing. The program emphasizes Indigenous pedagogy, experiential learning, and cultural teachings.

This certificate engages learners through 10 foundational courses that explore language, Anishinaabe ways of knowing (Gikendaasowin), spirituality, and the history and diversity of Anishinaabe peoples across Manitou Aki.

The program is an act of sovereignty: bringing to fruition Chief Shingwauk's vision for a teaching lodge in which students would learn knowledge and skills needed to survive in contemporary society, while not losing their identity as Anishinaabeg.

Congratulations to the team at Shingwauk Kinoomaage Gamig on their amazing work!

Learn more about Shingwauk Kinoomaage Gamig by visiting their website: shingwauku.org

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.



Get in Touch



Updates from the IAESC Team

Development of the Indigenous Master's Degree Standards for Indigenous Institutes

On May 27, 2026, the Steering Committee reviewed and largely approved the revised Indigenous Master's Degree Standards, now reframed as "responsibilities" to reflect an Indigenous governance approach. The committee confirmed strong alignment with the Ontario Qualifications Framework while noting that the standards also advance Indigenous-led priorities such as relational accountability, learner supports, and community-grounded design. A few targeted refinements remain ahead of the August submission, with key milestones including the August 5 in-person meeting, August 6 mini-research symposium, and final submission later in August.



Community Engagement

IAESC staff have been present at a number of community engagement events over the course of the last several months.

We attended the following events on Rama First Nation (where our office is located!):

- Chiefs of Ontario Annual Chiefs Assembly
- Rama First Nation Language Conference

We also presented at the Cross-Country Quality Assurance Virtual Conference, participated in the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance Panel Review, and, presented at the Canadian Society for the Study of Education Conference.



Quality Assurance

Updates and Approvals

On May 29, 2026, the Indigenous Institutes Quality Assessment Board (IIQAB) held its quarterly committee meeting to review program applications from the Indigenous Institutes.

At this meeting, the following approvals were granted:

Program Review Approvals

Shingwauk Kinoomaage Gamig
Anishinaabe Gikendaasowin Certificate

Kenjgewin Teg
Biidwewdamowaad Nimkiig Biidaabang
Certificate III

Biidwewdamowaad Nimkiig Biidaabang
Certificate III with Teaching Stream

The next IIQAB meeting is scheduled for August 21, 2026.

**Interested in joining IIQAB
or an Expert Panel?**

Reach out to us today!



Get in Touch

About IIQAB

The Indigenous Institutes Quality Assessment Board

 *Learn more at iaesc.ca*

The Indigenous Institutes Quality Assessment Board (IIQAB) consists of postsecondary education experts and Knowledge Keepers who reflect the diversity of Indigenous Peoples and communities across Ontario.

Meeting quarterly, IIQAB reviews the program and organizational review applications received from Indigenous Institutions. The successful approval of an organizational review allows for Indigenous Institutes to submit program review applications, which then allow for the delivery of recognized accredited programs. This means that program credentials are recognized by the Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security.

IIQAB is committed to a fair, objective and transparent assessment process. This process recognizes the importance of Indigenous culture, language and knowledge systems. This helps to ensure that new programs are grounded in Indigenous worldviews and designed to meet the needs of Indigenous learners. At the heart of this work is the belief that learners thrive when their identities, histories, and ways of knowing are reflected in their education.

Additional Updates from the IAESC Team

IAESC & Kenjgewin Teg at CICAN

Our Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICan) presentation with our colleague from Kenjgewin Teg highlighted how, through our Quality Assurance roles at IAESC, we collaboratively strengthen program quality and provide system transformation across the nine Indigenous Institutes in Ontario.

This session emphasized capacity-building by sharing adaptable tools, evidence-informed practices and strategies that support institutes in advancing their own community-driven priorities. Quality assurance is strongest when it reflects community realities, honours lived experience, and involves learners, Knowledge Keepers, and staff in co-creation.

While our co-lead from Kenjgewin Teg showcased centering diverse voices – including learners, Knowledge Keepers, community partners, institute leadership and for some programs regulatory bodies; while the conversation also reflected the lived realities, strengths, expectations and aspirations that shape Indigenous higher education.

Our team brought all these elements together into a dynamic, community-rooted session that sparked meaningful dialogue and was well received by participants.



April 21 – 23, 2026

The CICan 2026 Connections Conference
“Building a Strong & Secure Canada”

Sue Eckenswiler and Tammy McNabb (IAESC)
Nicole Nicolas (Kenjgewin Teg)

New Annual Report

We are pleased to announce the creation and release of the new Annual Report. This document is for each Indigenous Institute with an IAESC-approved Certificate, Diploma or Post-Diploma Certificate program. The report will be filled out and submitted annually each year following the approval of the program.

The Annual Report is meant to support and guide Academic Deans, Program Leads or quality assurance staff (where applicable) in tracking and ensuring high-quality delivery and maintenance of your standalone programs.

The quality assurance team at IAESC are always here for support or any questions you may have. Don't hesitate to reach out and stay tuned the Midterm Report, which will serve a similar purpose for IAESC-approved degrees! The Annual Report can be found on the resources page on our website.

News & Updates

Orange Shirt Day: Design Contest for Indigenous Youth

We invite you to share our t-shirt design contest with any Indigenous youth who may be interested in submitting a design!

**Indigenous Youth
T-Shirt Design Contest**

September 30 "Orange Shirt Day"
National Day for Truth & Reconciliation

Contest Details

The winning design will be featured on the IAESC Orange Shirt which will be shared with staff, volunteers & partners.

Winner will receive:

- Apple AirPods Max 2
- Apple iPad Air
- Apple Pencil Pro

Contest Rules:
Open to Indigenous youth ages 12-25 in Ontario.
AI generated submissions will not be accepted.
One submission per person.

Deadline
July 15, 2026

IAESC
Indigenous Advanced
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Scan QR Code to Upload
Design & Complete
Submission Form

News Highlights

[\\$4.4 Million Investment for FNTI's Aviation Centre](#)

[Inaugural Cohort from Indigenous Journalism Certificate Program](#)

[Kenjgewin Teg Partnership Agreement with Cambrian College](#)

[AEI Strengthening Program Development](#)

[Oshki-Pimache-O-Win Celebrates over 140 Graduates](#)

[SGEI and Confederation College Sign Relationship Accord](#)

[SNP Celebrates over 140 Graduates](#)



Scan the QR code to visit our website and follow us on [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#)!

Career Opportunities

- [FNTI](#)
- [Six Nations Polytechnic](#)
- [Kenjgewin Teg](#)
- [Oshki-Pimache-O-Win](#)
- [Shingwauk Kinooomaage Gamig](#)