

Building Reconciliation at the U of S

College of Arts and Science

Aboriginal Student Achievement Program (ASAP)

DESCRIPTION OF ASAP

More than 1000 Aboriginal students are pursuing their goals at the College of Arts & Science at the University of Saskatchewan. The Aboriginal Student Achievement Program welcomes these students into their first year of study, helping them succeed, and building an Aboriginal student community on campus. ASAP supports students as a whole people – academically, financially, personally, socially and culturally.

ASAP is offered within a Learning Communities model; first year Aboriginal students register through an Academic Advisor in small classes, taking sets of common courses together plus tutorials to build academic skills. All courses are taught by professors who understand the cultures and needs of Aboriginal students. In addition to sharing a classroom experience, the students gather as a community for a weekly ASAP LC Hour guided by two upper year Aboriginal peer mentors. During the ASAP LC Hour, students build a community, learn about study skills and career options, participate in cultural activities and get involved in the larger university community. Students also meet throughout the year with dedicated Aboriginal student academic advisors who help support and guide them.

CONTACT

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PURPOSE

ASAP offers a wide range of supports to help Aboriginal students succeed academically, enjoy their university experiences, and overcome any barriers they may face.

Academic:

- Popular first year courses
- Small classes
- Tutorials
- Culturally-aware and engaged faculty
- *Strategies for Academic Success* course

Academic Advising:

- Dedicated Aboriginal Academic Advisor
- Individual attention to students' goals and needs
- Holistic and culturally-informed advising
- Early warning system to identify students at risk
- Trish Monture Centre for Student Success – Arts 250

Learning Communities:

- Upper year Peer Mentors
- Weekly LC Hour to build community and make connections to services and supports on campus
- Pre-made first year schedule of classes
- Assistance with registration

Financial:

- Bursaries for every ASAP student each term
- Bursaries for Aboriginal students with children
- Liaison with First Nations bands



SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

"95% of ASAP students would recommend ASAP Learning Communities to a sibling or friend"

SOURCE: 2015-16 ASAP LEARNING COMMUNITIES STUDENT SURVEY MARCH 2016

ASAP has been helping students succeed in the College of Arts and Science for the past five years.

A detailed, external program evaluation is underway.

The program is challenged by a wide range of external barriers faced by our students.

Initial results show us that the program successfully retains students from 1st to

2nd year, but that retention beyond 2nd year, once students leave ASAP, continues to be a challenge.

HOW IT BUILDS RECONCILIATION

ASAP is a program that was developed to eliminate educational gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians,

leading to improved education and income outcomes.

By improving education attainment levels and success rates, this program's goals are in direct alignment with

the TRC's Calls to Action for Education.

