

Building Reconciliation at the U of S

Aboriginal Students' Centre and International Students and Study Abroad Center

Building Bridges Program

DESCRIPTION

The Building Bridges program is an Aboriginal Student Centre (ASC) - International Student and Study Abroad Centre (ISSAC) partnership. It originated in September of 2013 to provide programming for the whole campus community with a focus on International and Aboriginal relations and cultural understanding.

Over the past 3 years this partnership has engaged over 1100 students, staff, and faculty and community members at the University of Saskatchewan through a variety of activities including social events, workshops and sharing circles.

Building Bridges recognizes that certain people in our society face oppressive experiences because of individual and systemic unequal power related to race, culture, ethnicity, language, nationality, and other forms of conscientiously held belief. This has particularly affected the Indigenous population in Canadian.

Building Bridges also recognizes that understanding and working to eliminate oppression is a learning process for us all. We know that different people can be at different stages in the learning process and we all need to make the effort to learn, create opportunities for learning and assist each other in the learning process.



CONTACT

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PURPOSE

Building Bridges focuses on International and Aboriginal relations and cultural understanding .

The Building Bridges program brings together international, Indigenous and domestic students and provides a safe, inclusive, and

supportive space to learn about Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures, dispel myths, ask questions, promote commonalities, and respectfully understand our differences.

Objectives

- Facilitate respectful inquiry and foster open discussion
- Share personal perspectives and experiences through storytelling
- Provide an opportunity to build relationships, to connect and collaborate
- Acknowledge history, recognize

social impacts, and empower participants

SUCSESSES AND CHALLENGES

Student and Faculty Engagement:

The program provides a relaxed environment and opportunity for students to develop cultural intelligence and learn about various issues that affects Indigenous and international students and explore their role in promoting cultural understanding.

Community Engagement:

Our events provides avenues for cross-cultural engagement. Particularly exploring cultural similarities and differences. Events solely targeted at students such as the City of Saskatoon Bus-tour enables student engage with community members in Saskatoon.

Partnerships and Collaboration:

Building Bridge collaborates with various groups in the University and Saskatoon for its programs including University Faculty, the City of Saskatoon, Office of Treaty Commission, Canadian Roots Exchange, GSA, Confucius Institute, Parents on Campus, Parent Circle etc.



HOW IT BUILDS RECONCILIATION

Education:

Building Bridges increases students' capacity for intercultural understanding and builds mutual respect.

"Thank you! I am 22 years old and have only just recently started to learn more about the Indigenous point of view of our history. This

definitely helped and was very significant. I am always emotionally moved by events like these."

"A very powerful activity. Makes for a great springboard for "What next?" What do we do to make change and respond to the TRC's

calls to action. What is my own personal call to action?"

Information for Newcomers to Canada:

The programming provides the history of Aboriginal peoples of Canada to international students and newcomers to Canada.

"This session brought to perspective the amount of loss of land, people, culture, pride, etc that took place when the settlers came to Canada. The folding of the blankets showed the restrictions the Indigenous people faced."