

Building Reconciliation at the U of S

International Centre for Northern Governance and Development (ICNGD)

Building Leaders in Northern Saskatchewan

BACKGROUND

Northern Saskatchewan is a vast region characterised by breath-taking views, world-class fishing, hunting and outdoor activities, and a way of life rich in history, traditions, and knowledge. It is also known for its remoteness and the associated challenges. Northern Saskatchewan also has one of the highest proportion of Aboriginal peoples in all of Canada (over 80%) and the legacy of residential schools can be seen throughout the North. Challenges include:

- Lower levels of access to services and significant infrastructure challenges impede community well-being, quality of life, and socio-economic development.
- Lower educational attainment levels than the rest of the province. Overall, 85% of Saskatchewan's population between the ages of 25-64 had completed high school or equivalent compared to 55% in the North.
- Despite Saskatchewan as a whole having one of the lowest unemployment rates in Canada (5.9%), northern Saskatchewan had the second highest unemployment rate (17.9%) out of all the provincial and territorial norths.
- Northern Saskatchewan is the second only to northern Manitoba for housing in need of major repairs at 28.1% (national – 7.4%, provincial – 9.3%).

Better access to infrastructure and services will enhance northern communities' capacity to generate social and economic development. Inadequate infrastructure lowers economic potential and access to markets, resources and technology, and in turn, creates barriers that effect community well-being. Having supports and policies in place that recognize the needs and unique characteristics of the North is crucial for creating a sustainable social environment.

CONTACT

www.usask.ca/icngd

MASTERS IN NORTHERN GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT (MNGD)

The **ICNGD** is a catalyst for placing northern Saskatchewan as a leader in the Circumpolar World. We serve the Provincial Norths by contributing to their social and economic prosperity through the creation of interdisciplinary, innovative, and community-driven discovery, teaching, and outreach. With northern and Indigenous communities, we promote opportunities and meaningful change for the Circumpolar World.

The **MNGD** is the only program of its kind in North America that offers students the unique opportunity to focus on northern issues. The program has supports in place so that northern-based applicants may remain in their home communities while completing the program. The program works in partnership with northern and Indigenous communities, industry, and government on economic development and governance issues in northern Saskatchewan.

Graduates are able to successfully lead northern development in Saskatchewan and elsewhere.



SUCSESSES AND CHALLENGES

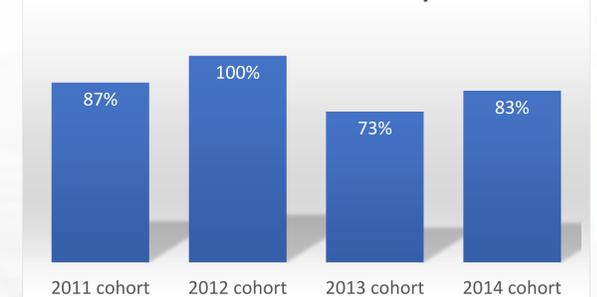
Since 2011, the MNGD has **graduated 38 students**, most of whom have remained in the North, building capacity. Our program has a **graduation retention rate of 83.6%**, one of the most successful programs at the University of Saskatchewan. We attribute this success to: (1) the determination of students; (2) the applied, northern focus; and (3) the supports in place to help students succeed. Graduate outcomes include:

- Consultant for northern communities on

greenhouses and food security.

- Instructors at University College of the North.
- Improving access to health services for Lac La Ronge Indian Band.
- Creating and implementing a culture program for elementary school children in Pinehouse.
- Advocate for diversity in the mining industry.
- Leading the creation of an Aboriginal arts and culture program in Saskatoon.
- Advocate for the preservation and promotion of the Cree language.

Graduate Retention Rate by Year



HOW THE PROGRAM BUILDS RECONCILIATION

The legacy of the residential school system is one of loss. Loss of culture, language, and loss of children and family relationships. It resulted in the loss of a way of being, a form of governance and self-reliance. The recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) aim to redress the legacy of residential schools and the Sixties Scoop to advance the process of Canadian reconciliation. The ICNGD plays a small, but vital role in this process for reconciliation in

Saskatchewan's north.

We are building reconciliation by:

- Consulting with northern and Aboriginal communities to determine their needs for building capacity.
- Delivering a barrier-free graduate program for northerners:
 - Blended delivery method
 - Fully funded
- Providing students with community-driven,

applied research internships that directly address many of the TRC recommendations (e.g., language retention, culture, education).

- Providing education and training to ensure northern Aboriginal people have equal access to jobs in the corporate sector.
- Empowering northern Aboriginal people to proceed with economic development opportunities that benefit their community.