

Building Reconciliation at the U of S

College of Pharmacy and Nutrition – Jaris Swidrovich, Jason Perepelkin, Kierra FineDay, Kishor Wasan

Cultivating Student Engagement in Reconciliation

DESCRIPTION

A group of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in the College of Pharmacy and Nutrition created a student-run group near the end of Term 1 of the 2016/2017 academic year, with the support and guidance of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous faculty members.

This student group is committed to reconciliation, Indigenous engagement, and supporting efforts relating to Indigenizing the College of Pharmacy and Nutrition. The involved students plan to propose having this group of students become an official branch of the Saskatchewan Pharmacy and Nutrition Students' Society (SPNSS) and to have an Indigenous Student Representative sit on the SPNSS Council and liaise between groups.



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PURPOSE

This official group of ~20 students in both pharmacy and nutrition will help foster the engagement of the student body in the College as it relates to reconciliation and Indigenizing the College. The students voted to have these mandates present in the title of the group, which is now officially named Students For Indigenous

Reconciliation and Engagement, or S-FIRE. The group will be holding its first event for the pharmacy and nutrition student body in March 2017, which happens to be during the nationally celebrated Pharmacist Awareness Month and also Nutrition Month.

As the College continues to move forward with Indigenizing its curriculum and program, this official group of students will help the College identify existing and future successes and opportunities for further improvement.



SUCSESSES AND CHALLENGES

CHALLENGES:

As a brand new student group, S-FIRE is not yet ratified, does not have any official policies, procedures, or terms of reference. S-FIRE does not have its own source of funds or its own operating budget. The initial startup of S-FIRE was funded by the Dean's office in the College of

Pharmacy and Nutrition. Low numbers of self-identified Indigenous students in both pharmacy and nutrition also remains a challenge.

SUCSESSES:

The process has been student-driven from the beginning and continues to operate in a way that

is by and for the students in the College. The group not only provides an avenue of support and guidance from the students to the faculty and staff, but also serves as a place for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students to support one another in a safe and welcoming environment. Having two faculty members serving in a

supportive role has been helpful for this new not-yet-ratified student group to be created and start thriving, especially as it relates to room booking, financial support from the College, and connecting the students to the work of other organizations.

HOW IT BUILDS RECONCILIATION

S-FIRE will certainly play a role in the College of Pharmacy and Nutrition's response to all seven health-related Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, and more. It is anticipated that S-FIRE will not only play a key role in the College's Indigenizing efforts, but

will also serve as a way to attract, recruit, and retain both Indigenous students and also non-Indigenous students who are committed to reconciliation and Indigenous engagement.

A common theme in the understanding of what

reconciliation means is recognizing the importance of relationships. S-FIRE will strive to create and maintain relationships with the current and future student body of Pharmacy and Nutrition, and likely also with the past student body (alumni). These relationships will not be

constrained to the pharmacy and nutrition student body, but also staff, faculty, other health science student bodies, and communities. Since S-FIRE is brand new, it is difficult to estimate all ways in which this group will build reconciliation, but it is clear this process has already started.