

Building Reconciliation at the U of S

School Of Physical Therapy

Gathering in Response to Truth & Reconciliation

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DESCRIPTION

The School of Physical Therapy (SPT) formed a “Truth & Reconciliation (TR) Working Group” in December 2015 in order to:

1. Advance the SPT’s respectful engagement and activity related to the university’s and nation’s response to the Truth & Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Report and Recommendations
2. Bring together Indigenous and non-Indigenous university and community members to inform our way forward
3. Maintain a strength-based, transparent and inclusive approach to responding to the TRC Calls to Action
4. Develop principles and values to guide a respectful and meaningful approach to responding to the TRC Calls to Action

The SPT TR Working Group has a responsibility to create a culturally safe teaching and learning space for all SPT students, staff, faculty, clinicians and guests.

A culturally safe space for teaching and learning at our School will:

- Enhance the experience of Indigenous students attending the SPT
- Support the long-term development of culturally competent and humble physical therapy practitioners
- Inform culturally safe practices in our future physical therapy profession and within the Saskatchewan and Canadian health care system



Core SPT TR Working group (from left to right): Sarah Oosman, Val Arnault-Pelletier, Arlis McQuarrie, Ina van der Spuy (sitting).

Missing: Peggy Proctor

CONTACT

For further information on this initiative and associated activities, please contact Dr. Sarah Oosman (sarah.oosman@usask.ca).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank Elder Louise Halfe, Dr. Margaret Kovach, Mr. Eugene Arcand, former Chancellor Blaine Favel, Dr. Patti McDougall & Dr. Trent Watts for their contribution to our *Gathering*. Thank you to Candace Wasacase-Lafferty, Graeme Joseph & Ellmere Duquette for their support.

PURPOSE

PRIMARY PURPOSE: to create key **guiding principles and values** for the SPT TR Working Group. It became clear that at this early stage the Working Group was missing key Indigenous voices necessary to inform the guiding principles and values.

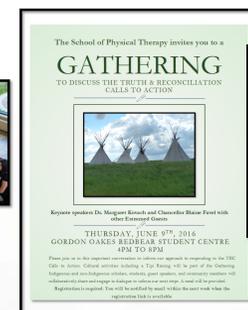
Initial Guiding Principles were created:

1. Inclusion of Indigenous first person voice whenever/wherever possible
2. Community engagement internal and external to the UofS
 - a. Métis & First Nations communities
 - b. Students
 - c. Organizations
 - d. Clinicians
 - e. Faculty
3. Creativity, innovation and openness are highly valued
4. Active engagement of Indigenous perspectives, opinions, values and culture throughout all group processes, planning and activities
5. Respect and acknowledge diverse worldviews
 - a. Shared and equal decision-making
 - b. Mutual benefit

SECONDARY PURPOSE at this early stage was to facilitate a Gathering in order to bring a diverse group of community members and university populations together to collaboratively share and engage in dialogue to inform next steps.

The *Gathering* was intended to bring ideas together from Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to:

- Co-create a relevant composition of our SPT TR Working Group
- Co-create and inform initial guiding principles
- Develop and nurture positive relationships
- Inform physical therapy students, staff and faculty regarding the TRC & beyond
- Promote engagement & dialogue



SUCSESSES AND CHALLENGES



The *Gathering* was integral to launching a series of important conversations, activities and sharing to inform a longer-term approach to responding to the TRC Report and Calls to Action.

Challenges with flexibility at diverse university levels continue to pose some barriers to accommodating certain cultural activities.



The Gordon Oakes Red Bear Student Centre provided tremendous support and cultural space in hosting this *Gathering*.



Indigenous and non-Indigenous students contributed to and engaged in all *Gathering* activities

Themes emerging from the *Gathering* and follow up activities:

- SPT Curriculum
- Experiential Learning
- Relationships & Engagement
- Admissions

HOW IT BUILDS RECONCILIATION

Our team believes that the journey towards ‘reconciliation’ within the School of Physical Therapy is a continual, iterative process of respectful engagement and action. The *Gathering* is merely a starting point... bringing diverse Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives and worldviews together to reconcile processes, teaching & learning activities at the SPT. Our collective vision: to develop culturally aware, competent and humble physical therapy practitioners.