2022 – 2023

Annual Progress Report
Land Acknowledgement

McGill University is on land which long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabeg nations. We acknowledge and thank the diverse Indigenous peoples whose footsteps have marked this territory on which peoples of the world now gather.
This year has been a time of growth and change for Indigenous initiatives at McGill. As the inaugural Associate Provost of Indigenous Initiatives (APII), I am grateful and humbled to work alongside a generous and diverse team of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples, all of whom are deeply committed to advancing the work of Indigenization and decolonization across our institution.

The academy continues to be a challenging place for Indigenous peoples whether they are students, faculty or staff. As I reflect on my own experiences in university, both as a student and later on, as a faculty member, I am reminded of how integral the support, advocacy and services offered through an office of Indigenous affairs were to my success. From the assistance I received as a PhD student and new mother, to the leadership and advocacy of Indigenous administrators. I have been very fortunate to work alongside many talented Indigenous colleagues who grounded their work in the values, teachings and protocols of the specific Indigenous territory where they worked, and who demonstrated a deep respect and understanding of the diversity of First Nations, Inuit and Métis histories. It is my lived experience as an Anishinaabekwe in the academy and what I have learned from those who came before me that will continue to inform my work.

As I reflect on the first year of my mandate, I am particularly grateful to the Elders, leaders and cultural advisors from our local and regional Indigenous communities that I have had the privilege of coming to know and learn from. Their advice and knowledge has been instrumental to my growth and continuous learning, and for this I am truly grateful.

Celeste Pedri-Spade
Associate Provost in Indigenous Initiatives
McGill University
Message from the Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic), Christopher Manfredi

When the Provost’s Task Force on Indigenous Studies and Indigenous Education submitted its Final Report in 2017, it was evident that the 52 Calls to Action it contained would prove ambitious and that the road to truth and reconciliation would be long and challenging. Nonetheless, since then, much work has been done and significant progress has been achieved. For example, it has led to greater resources and initiatives to make higher education more accessible to Indigenous students, new pathways for career development among our Indigenous academic, administrative and support staff, and the inauguration of cultural spaces to enhance Indigenous representation on our campuses. Further, the addition of new Indigenous voices to the McGill community over the past few years has not only enriched it with new perspectives, expertise and scholarship, but has also helped refine our strategic plan for indigenization, decolonization and reconciliation, and advance it greatly, as demonstrated in this Report.

I sincerely thank all members of the McGill community who have made this progress possible. I am especially grateful to the members of the Office of Indigenous Initiatives, including the team at First Peoples’ House, for their hard work and ongoing commitment, and to the many Indigenous communities’ members, leaders, Elders and Faithkeepers for their generous and essential contributions.

Together, we are making our University a better, more inclusive and stronger institution, where Indigenous excellence flourishes and benefits society as a whole. We still have a lot of work ahead of us, but McGill remains committed to dedicating energy and resources to this vital undertaking.

Christopher Manfredi
Provost & Vice-Principal (Academic)
McGill University

Message from Principal and Vice-Chancellor Deep Saini

Since 2017, McGill’s 52 Calls to Action have served as guideposts in advancing Indigenous representation, knowledge, and inclusion within our community. In the past year, these efforts to embed Indigeneity into the life of our University have taken diverse forms and have ushered in important progress.

These milestones have culminated in meaningful, enduring change — change that has contributed to McGill’s ongoing journey toward truth and reconciliation. I am grateful to the members of our local and regional Indigenous communities for their generous input and guidance. I am equally appreciative of the concerted work and dedication of McGill’s Office of Indigenous Initiatives, including the team at First Peoples’ House, as well as for the widespread engagement among individuals and groups across McGill.

Together, we have made great strides, but there remains much to be done. Continuing to meet our commitments requires ongoing learning, open dialogue, and space for reflection and reassessment where necessary. Doing so will be integral for McGill’s evolution toward becoming a more inclusive place where Indigenous members of our community feel recognized, respected and capable of thriving.

Deep Saini
Principal & Vice-Chancellor
McGill University
In 2016 the Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic) struck the Task Force on Indigenous Studies and Indigenous Education with the intent of outlining a clear pathway toward the advancement of Indigenous knowledge at McGill University. The Task Force called for a clear and comprehensive reconciliation plan for McGill.

From September 2016 to June 2017, five working groups established under the Task Force worked to imagine McGill’s own project of Indigenous recognition and reconciliation. This collaborative endeavor, for the first time, clearly linked McGill’s commitments to advancing Indigenization to the broader national calls put forward by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC). In 2017, the Task Force released a final report that outlined 52 specific Calls to Action for the University.

Call to Action #48 called for the creation of a central administrative unit to guide Indigenous strategies and initiatives across the University, and more importantly, to act as a steward of an overarching vision. This is how the Office of Indigenous Initiatives (OII) came to be.

Today, the Office of Indigenous Initiatives (OII), which includes the First Peoples’ House, oversees the University’s commitments to truth and reconciliation by championing the implementation of the 52 Calls to Action. This involves the work of advancing Indigenous student and faculty success, embedding Indigeneity in all facets of university life, and developing and strengthening relationships with Indigenous peoples and communities. The OII is composed of a diverse collective of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples who provide strategic advice to academic and administrative units across McGill’s campus community. As a team, OII works collaboratively with members of the McGill community to advance TRC and broader commitments to Indigenization and decolonization in the areas of Indigenous academics, Indigenous student success, communications, events and relationship-building, enhancing Indigenous presence and Indigenous physical representation.

In Winter 2023, the Associate Director of Indigenous Student Success commenced the process of developing a formal Indigenous alumni association, signaling an important step in connecting Indigenous professionals with Indigenous students at the university.

In April 2023, it was announced that three Indigenous people would receive honorary doctorates from McGill University during May and June 2023. The Indigenous honorary doctorates include: (1) Drew Hayden Taylor, Doctor of Letters, honoris causa (D.Litt.), Anishinaabe, Curve Lake First Nation; (2) Amelia Tekwatonti McGregor, Doctor of Science, honoris causa (D.Sc.), Mohawk, Kahnawà:ke; and (3) Charlie William Watt, O.Q., Doctor of Laws, honoris causa (LL.D.), Inuk, Kuujjuaq.

In Fall 2022 McGill launched the McGill Okónra Undergraduate Award, offering $5,000 to Indigenous students enrolled in any McGill undergraduate degree program, including on-campus Bachelor, Law (BCL/JD), Medicine (MDCM) and Dentistry (DMD). The award is managed by Indspire which offers the award in each year of study to a maximum of $20,000 per student per degree. Like other units at McGill, the First Peoples’ House works to distribute this information to students, both current and prospective.

In 2022-2023, the OII supported various ongoing campus re-design projects aimed at advancing Indigenous physical representation at McGill. These include the Y-Intersection Project, the Fiat Lux Library Project, the New Vic Project and the New Chancellor Day Hall Project (Faculty of Law). Each of these projects will reflect McGill’s commitment to Indigenous education through the display of Indigenous art and culture on its campuses.

In November 2022, OII welcomed a Senior Advisor on Indigenous Curriculum and Pedagogy tasked with providing strategic advice to individual faculty and academic leaders across the University. Working in collaboration with other units including Teaching and Learning Services, the Senior Advisor supports meaningful and respectful relations with Indigenous communities and their respective knowledge.
In Fall 2022, the OII participated in the launch of a targeted Indigenous rank CAS cluster hire to encourage faculty recruitment from local or proximate territories and to provide a mechanism for the inclusion of Indigenous professionals/community members who may only be interested in part-time teaching and service duties.

In Winter 2023, 15 new Indigenous faculty and staff were welcomed to the McGill community. The number of faculty and staff welcomed increased from seven last year, in Winter 2022. The new faculty and staff include First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people from across Canada.

First Peoples’ House (FPH) is the branch of the Office of Indigenous Initiatives that provides a home away from home for Indigenous students pursuing post-secondary education. As a diverse team, FPH staff provide academic, cultural, and community support, as well as other resources to ensure Indigenous students succeed and thrive at McGill.

While academic success is important, students should also have access to enjoyable and meaningful experiences that support their academic journey. To that end, FPH organized various cultural and community events. For example, in the Fall, FPH hosted weekly beading workshops with Rebekah Elkerton as well as a hand drum making workshop with Elaine [...]
Kishtabish from Tribal Spirit. Undergraduate and graduate networking opportunities were introduced early in the Fall semester. During the Winter, FPH coordinated Pow Wow Fitness with Deanne Hupfield, Ash Craft with Terry Young, and Soapstone Carving with Saali Kuata. Indigenous entrepreneur Cheyenne Doxtator also lead an 8-week beadwork group online. While these events exist to support students, they also support Indigenous Knowledge Keepers and entrepreneurs, as well as help build connections to the Indigenous community outside of McGill. FPH’s team also coordinated a workshop on Self-Advocacy for Indigenous Students. Lastly, FPH continued to host a weekly Soup and Bannock lunch as well as three festive feasts during Harvest season, Winter holiday and Easter break to bring the broader Indigenous McGill community together.

FPH recognizes that it is also important to take advantage of the social and networking opportunities available in the broader city of Montreal. In the Fall, FPH organized off-campus outings like bowling, apple picking, theatre nights and skating. Students were also given the opportunity to attend imagineNATIVE Film & Media Arts Festival. In the Winter, FPH took students to the Botanical Gardens as well as to a Cabane à sucre. Being a student often means living on a tight budget. As such, events like these help students explore the city without stressing their finances.

Lastly, FPH is fortunate to work with the Indigenous Studies and Community Engagement Initiative (ISCEI) on campus. With the support of ISCEI, FPH was able to host gatherings between students, Artist in Residence Tiffany Shaw, Writer in Residence Greg Horn, and Knowledge Holder Owisokon Lahache. FPH also works collaboratively with the School of Continuing Studies and the Office of First Nations and Inuit Education to celebrate Indigenous student success through a virtual graduation ceremony each semester. Collaborations with other partners in Student Services, and in Enrolment Services are ongoing and announced each semester. In March, OII welcomed the appointment of a new Administrative Supervisor of First Peoples’ House, Matthew Coutu-Moya. Working under the leadership of the Associate Director of Indigenous Student Success, Matthew will oversee operations and the continued delivery of FPH services. Our team is passionate about being of service to Indigenous students and are honored to be entrusted with supporting their well-being alongside the other faculty and staff on campus providing support. We will continue to provide the supports that students have come to expect, while continuously improving and enhancing our services as our understanding of Indigenous student needs evolves.

2017 Provost’s Task Force Final Report called on the University to set a target of at least 35 Indigenous tenure-track or tenured professors for appointment by 2032. This Call demonstrates a key understanding that Indigenous faculty recruitment and development is a crucial part of embedding Indigeneity in university life.

In addition to the call to support greater Indigenous faculty member recruitment, it is imperative that McGill continue to support the recruitment and retention of Indigenous staff members throughout its campus community. During this period, McGill welcomed 15 new Indigenous faculty/staff members.

In response to Call to Action #26 (Indigeneity and Public Spaces at McGill), the OII supported various ongoing projects aimed at advancing Indigenous physical representation at McGill.

This work responds to McGill’s 2019 Master Plan, which calls for the development of interior and exterior spaces on campus that serve Indigenous peoples in the McGill community. In particular, the plan outlined the need to foster a sense of belonging by providing suitable cultural spaces for Indigenous students, staff and faculty that reflect McGill’s commitment to Indigenous education and support increasing enrolment targets for Indigenous students.

In this vein, the OII helped facilitate Indigenous community engagement for the Y-Intersection Project throughout Fall 2022. This work was done alongside Kahnawake’s Plant Consulting & Communications, McGill’s Facilities Management and Ancillary Services, McGill’s Master Plan Stakeholder Relations, and special consultant Phillip White-Cree from Akwesasne. Twenty-nine Indigenous stakeholders took part in this community engagement process across nine focus groups or personal interviews. They offered invaluable ideas and feedback on the re-design of McGill’s well-known Y-Intersection, which is set to be renovated in the coming years.

In 2022, the OII also supported Indigenous community consultations for the Fiat Lux Library Project, which will see McGill’s main library reimagined. Part of the re-design will include dedicated space for the Indigenous community on campus, including the integration of Indigenous public art.

During this period, the Associate Provost (Indigenous Initiatives) participated in the Ad Hoc Group tasked with preparing an Action Plan based on the report released by the Working Group on Indigeneity in Infrastructure Planning and Development (WGIIPD). Several meetings were held throughout 2022-2023, and the final Action Plan is set to be presented back to the Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic) and the Vice-Principal (Administration and Finance) in Spring 2023.

Finally, to support more culturally relevant and safe learning spaces, the OII commenced work with the McGill Fire Prevention Office to improve smudging requests across McGill’s campuses. This work will result in the co-development of a smudging policy and education guide in the near future.
In November 2022, the OII welcomed Professor Geraldine King to its team as the Senior Advisor on Indigenous Curriculum and Pedagogy. In this role, Prof. King will provide strategic advice to individual faculty and academic leaders across the University with the goal of supporting meaningful and respectful relations with Indigenous communities, peoples, knowledge and epistemologies. Since November 2022, Prof. King has begun work to develop workshops for faculty Deans, Chairs, and Associate Deans at McGill with the goal of supporting academic leadership in meeting McGill’s reconciliation efforts. Notably, planning has begun in partnership with the Associate Provost, Teaching & Academic Planning to offer workshops on demystifying decolonial education and Indigenous assessment methodologies (in conjunction with Teaching and Learning Services). Planning is also underway for a future strategic planning session for faculties regarding how they can meet institutional Indigenization imperatives. Prof. King has also begun advising faculty and instructors individually and has provided content reviews for a major project being undertaken in the Department of Integrated Studies in Education (DISE) that seeks to offer resources to English public school boards in Quebec on integrating Indigenous content into curricula. Additionally, Prof. King joined the Indigenous sub-committee in DISE, where she offers expertise in Indigenous curricula and matters of equity and Indigeneity.

In February 2023, Prof. King joined the Associate Provost (Indigenous Initiatives) in a meeting with the McGill Library Cabinet. Together, they offered insights on how to begin the work of decolonizing libraries and move toward reconciliation. In the same month, Prof. King also delivered a much-anticipated workshop on decolonizing and Indigenizing digital and web spaces for an event hosted by McGill Web Services and the Equity Team.

In Winter 2023, the OII launched its first annual Winter Indigenous Speakers Series. In partnership with the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, the first event welcomed Inuk Elder Reepa Evic-Carleton for a conversation on Inuit traditional knowledge and ways of being. In partnership with the Anti-Black Racism Action Plan at McGill, the OII also hosted Dr. Kyle Mays, a Black-Chippewa scholar currently at UCLA. Prof. Celeste Pedri-Spade also offered a presentation entitled “Material Kwe” that centred on her material art pieces and the stories behind them. Finally, the OII collaborated with McGill’s Indigenous Student Alliance to host lakieehwá:ntha Patton for a lunch with Indigenous students. Patton, a member citizen of Kahnawake, is the first female First Nations recipient of the Rhodes Scholarship, the world’s oldest and most prestigious international graduate scholarship program.

In Fall 2022, the OII hosted an Inuit event series called, Ajuinnata at McGill. The series showcased Inuit excellence and achievement, and featured presentations by Inuit political leaders (Natan Obed, Pita Aatami, Lisa Koperqualuk), health and wellness experts (Richard Budgell, Minnie Grey), climate change activists (Sheila Watt-Cloutier), artists (asinnajaq, Pasha Partridge), curators (Krista Ulujuk Zawadask) and more. The series also included the installation of the Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit: Art, Architecture, and Traditional Knowledge exhibition on McGill’s downtown campus, as well as a complementary Inuit art installation prepared by the McGill Visual Arts Collection, called Takunnanguaqtangit. Both were installed at McGill’s Peter Guo-hua Fu School of Architecture.

Also in Fall 2022, the OII hosted the 11th annual Indigenous Awareness Weeks – two weeks of Indigenous programming at McGill. Different events included the 21st Annual McGill Pow Wow, a presentation by Cassidy Caron (President, Métis National Council), a presentation on “Wampum in Montreal History,” by Darren Bonaparte, the first Legacy Game, a varsity lacrosse game honouring the Indigenous roots of lacrosse, and a presentation by Mike Kanentakeron Mitchell, the former Chief and Grand Chief of Akwesasne.

In response to Call to Action #50 (Communications and Awareness-Building), the OII has been involved in the coordination of numerous events that amplify Indigenous voices and perspectives on campus. In Fall 2022, the OII hosted an Inuit event series called, Ajuinnata at McGill. The series showcased Inuit excellence and achievement, and featured presentations by Inuit political leaders (Natan Obed, Pita Aatami, Lisa Koperqualuk), health and wellness experts (Richard Budgell, Minnie Grey), climate change activists (Sheila Watt-Cloutier), artists (asinnajaq, Pasha Partridge), curators (Krista Ulujuk Zawadask) and more. The series also included the installation of the Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit: Art, Architecture, and Traditional Knowledge exhibition on McGill’s downtown campus, as well as a complementary Inuit art installation prepared by the McGill Visual Arts Collection, called Takunnanguaqtangit. Both were installed at McGill’s Peter Guo-hua Fu School of Architecture.

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Events

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Accountability to Indigenous Communities

Enhancing External & Internal Communications

The 2017 Provost’s Task Force Final Report called on McGill’s Communications and External Relations (CER) unit to ensure that McGill’s public narratives celebrate the work, accomplishments and initiatives of Indigenous students, faculty and staff. This should be so not only on occasions that mark events commemorating Indigeneity or equity (e.g., National Aboriginal Day, the McGill Award for Equity & Community Building celebration), but rather, as a matter of course.

During Fall 2022-Winter 2023, the OII had several meetings with McGill’s Communications and External Relations (CER) unit in the spirit of relationship-building and collaboration. This led to further meetings with both the internal communications team, and the team that supports media relations. In collaboration with CER, the OII is now developing a strategic communications plan and has initiated some upcoming (Spring 2023) initiatives to better highlight OII projects and activities.

During this period, the OII also launched several tools and initiatives aimed at improving communications with both internal and external stakeholders. These include: a new weekly OII update sent to all Indigenous faculty and staff (and also to McGill allies) interested in staying abreast of both McGill Indigenous information and information related to local/proximate Indigenous organizations; a centralized online OII e-Calendar which lists Indigenous events taking place across McGill campuses; and a quarterly OII newsletter which highlights and shares Indigenous initiatives and new from across McGill University with its subscribers.

In January 2023, members of the OII team also met with team members from the Indigenous Studies and Community Engagement Initiative (housed in the Faculty of Arts) to better coordinate institutional communications related to Indigenous events and initiatives within and beyond McGill.

To enhance communications and support relationship-building with Indigenous faculty and staff across McGill’s campuses, the OII hosted two quarterly gatherings since Fall 2022—one in November 2022 and another in February 2023. The attendance at the Winter gathering (30 individuals) was almost double what it was in the Fall, signaling a growth in interest and engagement.

Indigenous Citizenship Verification

Faculty & Staff

Pursuant to the internal discussions and engagement with both Indigenous faculty and staff and broader members of the McGill community (including those holding senior academic roles), the OII formed the Indigenous Citizenship Verification in Employment Related Opportunities (ICVERO) Working Group in January 2023. The role of the ICVERO Working Group is to achieve a draft policy and set of procedures related to McGill’s commitment to ensuring that positions and opportunities intended for Indigenous Peoples are filled by Indigenous Peoples. This work extends from Calls to Action #44 and #52—both related to McGill’s hiring of Indigenous peoples. [...] (p.18)
The ICVERO Working Group is comprised of internal Indigenous faculty members and staff. In selecting these internal members, equity and diversity principles were employed to ensure we have First Nations, Inuit, and Métis representation, in addition to a representative from an Indigenous Nation whose territory extends outside of Canada’s borders. The Working Group also includes community-based advisors that reflect our territorial obligations to Kanien’kéha’ka people. The Working Group has also committed to consulting with advisors from other Indigenous nations as required.

To support timely and transparent communication on this work, the OII has dedicated a page on its website to update the community on its progress. This includes access to the Terms of Reference, the meeting schedule and summaries, and key resources on the topic.

**Indigenous Students**

While the emphasis has been on the hiring aspect of this file, sessions took place in March with Indigenous students where the Associate Provost Indigenous Initiatives (APII) and Associate Director (Indigenous Student Success) provided an update on the institutional work to date related to Indigenous citizenship.

Earlier in 2023, the Associate Provost and Associate Director of Indigenous Student Success met with the Registrar and Executive Director of Enrolment Services to develop a plan for the student component of policy and procedures related to Indigenous citizenship verification. What was signaled in this meeting was the importance of convening a committee that engages students in its leadership and overall work. To this end, the Associate Director of Indigenous Student Success and the APII co-launched a second Working Group, which continued its work throughout the summer months. Having both working groups housed in the OII will helped ensure a coordinated effort.

**Indigenous Advisory Council**

Call to Action #51 (Establishing and Strengthening Partnerships) calls upon McGill to create a formal Indigenous Advisory Council whose composition includes community leaders and stakeholders at McGill. This action is fundamental to recentering the significance of relationship-building with Indigenous communities as respected partners in our efforts aimed at Indigenization and decolonization.

An initial meeting related to this work was held with First Peoples Group (FPG), an Indigenous-owned firm that specializes in relationship-building with Indigenous peoples and their respective communities and Nations. FPG submitted a proposal to support OII in the establishment of an Indigenous Advisory Council with a 12-month time frame, and in Spring 2023, the proposal was finalized.
Indigenous Inclusion at McGill University

During the 2022-2023 academic year, the Office of Indigenous Initiatives worked collaboratively with its internal partners who are spearheading distinct initiatives aimed at supporting Indigenous student academic success. We are pleased to highlight the activities of these important initiatives, which are funded through the Québec Ministry of Education’s program support for Indigenous peoples grant.

Indigenous Relations Initiative, School of Continuing Studies

Indigenous Inclusion at McGill supported the ongoing development of 12 courses that contribute to the STEM Foundations program, including courses in math, biology, physics, chemistry, statistics and communications. To support the Indigenization and decolonization of curricula, two Indigenous curriculum consultants were hired to guide the subject matter experts (SMEs). Additionally, the Academic Program Coordinator worked closely with all the SMEs and the Indigenous consultants to ensure the program was developed in a cohesive, comprehensive and culturally-relevant manner.

Throughout 2022-2023, the Adaptive and Integrated Learning and Indigenous Relations Initiative Director worked to develop new Indigenous community partnerships with the goal of delivering a community-based certificate program in STEM Foundations within James Bay Cree territory. Conversations centred on working collaboratively with existing Cree educational authorities and community leadership on the delivery of programming, and on recruitment of and provision of ongoing support to Indigenous students.

IMPRESS & Pick Your Path

The Indigenous Mentorship and Paid Research Experience for Summer Students (IMPRESS) presents a remarkable opportunity for Indigenous undergraduate students enrolled in post-secondary institutions across Quebec. This immersive program allows them to collaborate with professors at McGill University and engage in impactful research activities. Spanning eight weeks, students dedicate 15 hours per week to their research endeavors, while allocating five hours per week to participating in supplementary activities, including professional development workshops, leadership training, networking and cultural activities. Each student is also assigned a graduate student mentor who offers support and guidance throughout the program. In recognition for their participation in IMPRESS, students receive a $5,000 award.

This inaugural year of the IMPRESS program surpassed expectations. Initially expecting five to six participants, the program received a total of 18 applications, with 14 students ultimately taking part. These students engaged in a diverse range of projects spanning various disciplines across the University, including Law, Education, Arts and Health Sciences. Several projects took a cohort-based approach, fostering a sense of community. [...] (p.22)
Mentorship serves as a pivotal component of the IMPRESS program, benefitting both the mentees and mentors alike. In 2022, 10 graduate student mentors participated in the program, with four of them guiding two mentees each.

**Pick Your Path, Undergraduate (PYP-U)**

This is a comprehensive learning experience designed specifically for Indigenous undergraduate students enrolled at McGill University. Comprised of four modules, this program offers a combination of sessions that are both educational and career-oriented. PYP-U aims to support Indigenous students in their academic pursuits and help them explore potential pathways for their future. During the 2022-2023 academic year, the PYP-U program ran from October to March, engaging six Indigenous undergraduate students in an enriching learning experience comprised of four distinct modules: leadership, academic pathways, professional pathways, and career management.

**Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree delivered in Nunavik**

In June 2020, McGill responded to a Call for Proposals from the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Service (NRBHSS) to deliver a Bachelor of Social Work degree in Nunavik (BSW-N). An agreement in principle was reached in November 2020 between McGill and the NRBHSS and the contract was ratified in October of 2022. This will be the first post-secondary degree program offered in Nunavik, and one that is tailored specifically to Inuit contexts.

McGill’s Bachelor of Social Work program in Nunavik is scheduled to start in Fall 2023. In preparation for this, Inuit team members worked with Gordon Bruyere, an Anishinaabe scholar, social work professor and curriculum specialist, towards ensuring that the content of each course reflected Inuit values and practices. This group also collaborated to create a land-based, experiential course as the foundational opening course for the BSW-N. Delivered within an Inuit community, this course will provide an opportunity for the students to be introduced to social work, and to learn about traditional Inuit spirituality, values, philosophy, lifestyle and ceremonies in relation to self-knowledge and knowing of others.

In June 2022, many of the team members from Nunavik and Montreal attended the Inuit Studies Conference held in Winnipeg. We took advantage of being in the same place to meet in person in order to further develop our relationships and share ideas about the BSW-N.

**Fourth-Year Indigenous Field Experience**

With the administrative support of the Faculty of Education’s Internship and Student Affairs (ISA) office, the Office of First Nations and Inuit Education (OFNIE) placed 6 Indigenous students in one of five Indigenous communities in Quebec to complete their final placement for McGill’s Bachelor of Education Kindergarten and Elementary program. For seven weeks, these students experienced teaching in immersive Indigenous contexts, to Indigenous students, and following Indigenous pedagogies. The students received mentorship from Indigenous educators and community members. All six students successfully passed the field experience and OFNIE anticipates that some of the participants will take teaching positions with their host school boards.

In Winter 2023, the program was able to place students in Kativik Ilisarniliriq (the School Board of Nunavik) and the Cree School Board (CSB) schools, which it couldn’t do the previous year due to COVID-19 restrictions imposed by the Nunavik and Cree health boards.

Last year, OFNIE struck a new partnership with the Jimmy Sandy Memorial School of the Central Quebec School Board (CQSB) in Kawawchikamach as a means of widening the availability of placements. The relationship with Jimmy Sandy continued in 2022-2023. Interest in McGill’s distance placement program is growing at the board level and OFNIE anticipates that some of the participants will take teaching positions with their host school boards.

In Winter 2023, the program was able to place students in Kativik Ilisarniliriq (the School Board of Nunavik) and the Cree School Board (CSB) schools, which it couldn’t do the previous year due to COVID-19 restrictions imposed by the Nunavik and Cree health boards.