

Dawson College

The one-year Journeys First Peoples Transition Program is an introduction to CEGEP designed for First Nations, Inuit and Métis students that began in 2016.

Flexibility and a holistic multi-dimensional approach are core values of the program. This includes cultural safety, intensive academic skills training especially in reading and writing, ongoing community connections, time for relationship building, strengths.

We offer built-in academic, cultural and spiritual support, peer and professional tutoring and mentoring, group and individualized English, French and STEM supports, Indigenous guest speakers, artists, and knowledge holders in the classroom. Students gather at Dawson's First Peoples Center - a welcoming 'home away from home' where they can access cultural activities, academic and para-academic support, computers, printing, food and more. Our students, teachers and staff enjoy land-based learning opportunities, field trips, participation and community involvement in Indigenous gatherings and campus-wide activities including Indigenous Peoples' Week.

Students find a sense of community, a supportive environment, and smaller dedicated classes. Students gain collaborative, team and individual learning strategies, autonomy and advocacy skills that set them up for success in subsequent college programs. After Journeys, students can transition to any field of study at CEGEP.

Our students say:

"Being in Journeys is like being part of a family. The teachers and other students are there to support us no matter what the situation."

"What I enjoy most about being in the Journey's program is the collaborations we have in each class. I absolutely love getting to know other people and it's a great way of understanding other indigenous traditions as well."

The Decolonization and Indigenization Studies Certificate responds to guidelines developed with our Indigenous Education Council.

Its courses emphasize the contemporaneity and complexity of Indigenous life on Turtle Island today; highlight local Indigenous groups and their longstanding stewardship of and belonging to the land; emphasize Indigenous resilience, resurgence and refusal; and privilege Indigenous voices and Indigenous pedagogies.

The certificate's Foundation course is envisioned to be co-taught by one Indigenous and one settler teacher, equally compensated for their work. The College also compensates guest speakers who bring lived Indigenous experience and knowledge to the classroom so that students hear directly from Indigenous knowledge keepers from a variety of First Nations as well as Inuit and Metis. The course provides meaningful connection with students enrolled in the Journeys program, and involves the First People's Centre as well as settler students across the college.

Students are challenged to think about learning in terms of reciprocity and non-coercive value systems. They speak about the special freedom and care they have felt in this course because it's grounded in those values. Being taught by two Haudenosaunee professors means that the students have direct access to people who understand the longstanding governance systems that preceded settler arrival.

The Covid-19 pandemic has prevented off campus trips to engage in land-based pedagogies, and to learn with Elders and knowledge keepers in local communities. Some of our conversations with Elders are held online in order to safeguard them from the spread of Omicron. We're looking forward to more off-campus opportunities in future!

Learn much more at: dawsoncollege.qc.ca/journeys/ and dawsoncollege.qc.ca/decolonization-and-indigenization-studies/

Dawson College is a large, long-established educational institution within Quebec's network of CEGEPs that is woven into the fabric of academic life in Montreal.

Dawson students, faculty and staff embody a broad spectrum of languages and ethnic origins reflective of the multicultural character of Montreal itself. This diversity greatly enriches all members of the College community by providing a welcoming and stimulating environment in which to learn and work, and where students are prepared to assume their role as productive and responsible citizens of the world.